

Library Trends

Current Trends in Bookmobiles

HAROLD GOLDSTEIN, *Issue Editor*

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Library Trends

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Library Trends

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Current Trends in Bookmobiles

HAROLD GOLDSTEIN, *Issue Editor*

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Introduction

HAROLD GOLDSTEIN

THE EARLIEST BOOK WAGON went its uncertain way along the back roads of Washington County, Maryland, in 1905. Since then librarians in one way or another have been conscious of a challenge as well as a confusion in the use of mobile library service units. The challenge, of the type which Marshall Field, the great Chicago merchant, had in mind when he was presumed to have said: "Give the lady what she wants," is one as yet not fully answered some fifty-five years later. To some, bookmobile service is an attempt to bring the rudiments of basic library service to those who would not otherwise have it in their own localities. To others, the bookmobile is a good way to find out the interests and desires of people who have no fixed centers with regard to library service. To still another group, the use of bookmobiles is the only way in which to continue to serve their public in time of rising costs, limited potentialities for expansion, and confused geographical conditions.

The confusion about the role and value of bookmobiles is evident in the varied writings which comprise at best a meager literature. Some librarians, of institutions large and small, have a dim view of the logic implied in the use of these units by other librarians. Their opponents, on the other hand, seem to be reasonably sure that bookmobiles stir up interest, indicate directions for future consolidation or change, and are inclined to keep experimenting with moving branches. It is probably true that little evaluation has taken place—the results of which are available in print—of the value of bookmobiles in furthering library objectives, in actually stimulating doubtful areas, or in reassessing changing neighborhoods; yet it seems most improbable that today's administrators will either continue an existing service which may be doubtful, or begin such a venture without a great deal

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of investigation about the nature of this aspect of public library operations.

This issue of *Library Trends* deals with some broad areas of concern in the field of bookmobile service, as well as with some of the specifics of operation. The initial chapter is concerned with a rationale for the use of bookmobiles: the ends and objectives proposed, the achievement of these, and the relationships of extension service to the entire institution. The second chapter describes quite specifically the ways in which one modern library system has combined a theory of operation and a service plan.

In a short piece on personnel the author presents a plea for better librarians in all libraries, emphasizing that those who will work in bookmobiles must combine the best factors of service and understanding. The next section pays attention to daily operations. The needs of the system must be considered in the librarian's establishment of daily operational patterns. Specifics about service, policy, attitudes of staff and patron, and the handling of the unit itself are reviewed in some detail.

Following these statements by librarians there is a chapter on the selection of the mobile unit and other practical engineering aspects of the bookmobile as discussed by a leading sales engineer whose experience in working with librarians to establish some idea of criteria for the selection of a unit is evident in this material. Size, planning of the interior, equipment, and operating characteristics are a few of the items mentioned in some detail.

An unusual feature of the issue is the inclusion, for the first time in print, of the study of the economics of bookmobile operation. An American Library Association committee was charged with considering operating costs in 1955, and the results of their work are given by means of a complete chart of expenditures for 125 library operations during 1955-59. Librarians concerned with either justifying or computing the costs involved in mobile service will find herein a wealth of data for their use.

As a sort of conclusion to the practical concerns presented in the earlier chapter is a discussion of bookmobile publicity and public relations. The author presents ideas on the relation of publicity for one aspect of service with that of the total library effort.

A description of bookmobile operations in a number of countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia attests to the universal character of modern library development around the world. Finally, the concluding chapter presents some ideas for future bookmobile service.

Introduction

No attention has been paid to bookmobile use in college and university library operation for the very good reason that a cursory review of *Library Literature*, 1950-60, has not brought to light one article on such uses.

Mention was made in an earlier paragraph about the general lack of evaluative material on bookmobile service. From the standpoint of the librarian faced with starting operations, there is a body of data, mostly statistical, as to budget, schedules, and circulation results which he can find and use. From such data either the librarian who has just become interested or the one who has used bookmobiles over a period of years can find evidence on which to base his own conclusion. But the fact that most material to date is statistical in nature seems to indicate that available literature on bookmobile service has not concerned itself greatly with problems of objectives, total system orientation and direction, or the interpretation of an additional library operation with respect to its role in a system.

There is also need for a review of limits in bookmobile service coverage. It can be presumed that there are systems whose bookmobile schedules and extension are poor because of inadequacies brought on through stretching, as it were, to the utmost the usefulness of mobile units. The same schedule and coverage, on the other hand, in different circumstances might be entirely adequate and natural. What are such limits? On what basis is evaluation made of a particular service to arrive at measures of adequacy or inadequacy?

There is very little in the literature about bookmobile collections *per se*. It might be assumed that rules of thumb and other practical knowledge have been the guiding themes for the putting together and servicing of the small collections generally representative of bookmobile service. In the enlargement and/or change of such collections, no doubt each library with bookmobile service has come to some conclusion about desirable practices and results. The problem for the entire field, however, is that of finding out what individual libraries have gained from their experiences with this problem. What do we know about reader satisfaction from the standpoint of bookmobile operations versus that of the system without such units? Are there ways in which to deal with specific readers' requests and problems which are unique for bookmobile service, but about which the field in general is not informed? Is there anywhere experimentation with reader satisfaction to help overcome whatever problems arise from the use of a mobile unit with limited resources?

The reader will find allusions to general problems of coordination

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between bookmobiles and fixed service units. There is great need for a cogent review of logical and philosophical statements about library extension service, from which librarians can draw their own conclusions in terms of their own needs.

It is hoped that future writings on the problem of mobile library service will help provide answers to the questions above, and in so doing raise many other fundamental problems of concern to all inquiring, progressive, and interested librarians.

Changing Patterns of Library Service

RICHARD B. SEALOCK

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO the peddler of household supplies was a familiar sight in many rural areas of this country. His small horse-drawn wagon, loaded with useful articles, served a very important purpose in those days. Today, within reach of nearly all of these rural areas, and sprinkled generously in the suburban communities, one will find vast glass-enclosed emporia housing every conceivable food and household article.

These buildings stand out from a very great distance because of the miles of long white fluorescent lights. The resulting brilliantly lit interiors are plainly distinguishable and the passerby is able to identify many of the commodities without entering the building. Perhaps this new merchandising plan is made necessary by the huge number of items which are now desirable in every household; perhaps it is even more related to the invention of gas-propelled vehicles which can be had in one or more versions by every family in the land.

There is a relationship in this merchandise change to the distribution of books and library materials. These new ideas have been accepted in some library systems where the constant mobility of the individual has led to a change in library facilities. Branch libraries can be separated by a greater distance. In the creation of fewer agencies each agency can be stronger. Certain cities such as Los Angeles and Detroit which emphasize automobile use have been influenced by this mobility in the location and development of new branches. Old standards of distance or frequency and size can no longer be acceptable in such a situation.

Any comparison of library service to these merchandising developments must be considered in relation to the basic change in population that has occurred since 1941. This country has seen a remarkable movement of people from rural areas to cities and suburbs. New high totals for the number of residents in cities have just been reported in

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the census. Cities have also grown in geographical area by large annexations of surrounding land. Encircling older cities are many newly organized and rapidly expanding peripheral communities classified under the confusing heading of "suburbia." The task of cities today is to provide services, streets, protection, and orderly development in these new areas and for greater numbers of people. At the same time and as a consequence of this population migration to metropolitan centers there has been a loss in population in rural areas, and the difficulty of providing services considered necessary has increased.

Units of government, utilities, and business, even religious denominations are faced with keeping pace with the demands from these expanding, or changing new areas. Librarians in the search for immediate answers to service needs in such a situation have relied on a well-proven device, the mobile unit. Therein lies the danger. If the nature of mobile service is understood as temporary and incomplete, then such service can help fill the lag that is bound to occur in serving these new communities and sparsely settled rural areas. But at best a temporary or supplementary service, the bookmobile cannot meet the standards librarians have promoted.

Before looking at bookmobile functions some consideration should be given to extension services generally. For one thing we may well question whether readers can use effectively the many small branches and stations which have been sprinkled so liberally through our cities in recent times. Is it not true that the variety of requests received from readers and the many possible books on a subject which one may expect in these branches makes it impossible to render a respectable service in units having limited hours, limited staff, and only a sampling of adult and children's books? If such a question is asked about permanent branches and stations, it is likely that an even more serious question may be asked about the smaller unit on wheels. Even the largest of these can carry only a small representative stock of books and other materials to people who do not have ready access to permanently placed units. What is more they lack the many facilities which even the smallest branch attempts to provide—reference materials, tables for readers, and a fairly wide range of carefully chosen representative books on many subjects and in varying degrees of specialization. One might also question the infrequent days each month that a mobile unit is available.

In raising such questions attention first must be directed to the problems created by the recent population change already mentioned.

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The public library, like other governmental agencies and public service companies, is profoundly affected by the changes of the postwar period. The relocation of a major portion of the population into newly developed areas has for the most part reduced the income available for public services while at the same time libraries and other governmental agencies have been required to assist in the process of changing cornfields to mature, completely equipped residential areas. Most of these new residential sections are lacking a real tax base with which to support services of government. The suburban development which has drawn around itself a neat political boundary and included no substantial amount of industrial or business property has found it almost impossible to finance schools, streets, water systems, and public libraries. When additional areas have been acquired by annexation, the tax base has been more substantial, but a recurring rise in costs offsets the larger tax base.

The absence of adequate financial support is not the only program in the provision of services to new neighborhoods. Certainly the shortage of personnel has made it difficult to staff agencies such as those maintained by a public library. The time required for planning and erecting buildings further delays the development of schools and libraries. The demands are always several years ahead of accomplishment.

When public libraries, either new or existing, plan the extension of services to these new areas, these factors of inadequate finance and absence of buildings and staff complicate a situation already difficult because of the remoteness of many of these neighborhoods and the pressure of demand for library service immediately. In the newly formed regional libraries, many of which lack an older city library as a nucleus, the same pressures exist for the immediate installation of more or less permanent agencies. But library boards do not have the necessary capital and operating funds and they have been forced to move very slowly in providing new branches. The rapid growth of the population in these new areas and the immediate demand for service therefore has led to many innovations.

Among these has been new adaptations of the traditional use of book collections in schools. Some libraries as at Nashville and other cities have tried the grocery chain-store shelf collection. Others have turned to a reliance on the bookmobile without building any branches. Such was the decision at St. Louis County in Missouri accomplished through the development of a book distribution plan built around a

most carefully conceived fleet of general and specialized bookmobiles.

While these innovations made books available temporarily, more basic plans were being prepared. Surveys have been made for individual cities and regions which directed attention to the need for new branches and, at the same time outlined the criteria for providing these more substantial units of service. These surveys were necessary to prevent piecemeal action or concession to local pressure groups. The Dallas, Texas, survey by L. A. Martin is an excellent example of this approach. What is more interesting, this report shows what has happened to many American cities. The resulting plan, in brief, calls for adequate branches in the old city, and at the same time a circle of branches in the new portion of Dallas which completely rings the original city. The map which indicates the location of these branches illustrates the growth of Dallas and the difficulty of expanding the original library system to serve so much additional territory.

In passing it is worth noting the frequency in these surveys, of descriptions of still usable branch buildings which can no longer function because the neighborhood has changed.

Certainly the need for facilities to supply books to readers of all ages is great. There is always the temptation to reach a quick solution but which, nearly always, is inadequate. The provision of small, if ineffective, branches meets the demands of pressure groups. On the other hand, if some more temporary method can be introduced, time can be gained for securing adequate funds and the development of a sound plan. In such cases the bookmobile is perhaps the only solution to this temporary need.

For over sixty years some form of mobile unit has been on the scene. Whether horse-drawn or gas-propelled, it has made books available but more urgent now is the provision of books in quantity and variety. The inadequacy of the bookmobile for any long term use in a given neighborhood as a center for reading guidance and reference is obvious. It may be that the very inadequacies of bookmobile service have been responsible for so many counties deciding that the public library was not worth the added tax. For example the librarians in Pittsburgh and Allegheny county report that:

In one important aspect, the bookmobiles are not producing the desired results. Bookmobiles can be nothing more than book distributors; they can, of course, have no facilities for reference, study or the various other activities which comprise full library service.

It was hoped that the more populous communities would become

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dissatisfied with the bookmobiles, and establish local libraries of their own. Efforts to do so have been made in a few suburban areas, but so far they have been defeated by the cost factor. One must no doubt recognize that these new communities must complete sewers, paving and schools before establishing libraries.¹

Putting it another way, the peddler's cart is gone; the super store is here.

References

1. Pittsburgh. Carnegie Free Library. *Sixty-fourth Annual Report*. Pittsburgh, The Library, 1960, pp. 11-12.

Potentialities and Capabilities of Bookmobiles For Library Service

STEWART W. SMITH

DESPITE THE PHENOMENAL INCREASE in the use of bookmobiles since World War II there are still many librarians who question their efficacy as a means for providing any kind of adequate library service. The arguments of these librarians are primarily these two: first, bookmobiles by their very nature move from one place to another and must of necessity provide much less time for public service at any given spot than a fixed agency; thus if the patron cannot reach the bookmobile when it is at his neighborhood stop he is without library service. Second, because of space limitations bookmobile collections must be relatively small, reference materials inadequate, and no facilities such as tables and chairs can be provided.

Now, some aspects of these criticisms of bookmobiles must be granted in their entirety. Others, however, need varying degrees of qualification. It is certainly true that a bookmobile must meet schedule requirements and thus cannot be, or at least usually is not, available for public use as many hours in a week as even most very small branch libraries. But perhaps this is not as damning as it at first appears. Most human activities are to some degree circumscribed by the time element. Do we, for instance, condemn the railroads, air lines, steamship companies, and bus operators because they attempt to operate on a fixed schedule and are available for our use only at specific times? Do we expect our doctor or dentist to treat our aches and pains at any time which suits our convenience? Are banks open until 9:00 p.m.? The comparison might be carried on indefinitely but to little purpose.

Obviously, people must schedule their bookmobile visits when the bookmobile is available and most can do so without inconvenience. Also, this is a mobile age and all libraries having bookmobiles also

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have a headquarters, usually branches, and certainly other bookmobile stops. The patron, if the library system is properly integrated, may jump in his car and make use of such library agencies as are open at times most convenient for him.

It must also be admitted that bookmobile space limitations prescribe large general book collections, reference materials, and tables and chairs. But neither does the average branch library score well on any of these criteria with the possible exception of the provision of seating. A bookmobile collection which is properly policed and frequently changed through access to an adequate reservoir collection is ordinarily at least as "live" as those of most smaller branches. This is certainly true of specialized bookmobile collections. Granted that a branch is apt to contain more volumes, unfortunately, a high percentage of the books are either obsolete or no longer in demand for other reasons. As for reference materials, while even the smallest branch will provide some of them they are generally inadequate beyond the most rudimentary requirements and the patron must go to either a large branch or to the central library to satisfy his needs.

As opposed to those librarians who condemn bookmobile service in toto there is a more moderate and rapidly growing group, to which the writer belongs, which feels that the bookmobile is a highly useful public service agency, in its place. Not even the most enthusiastic supporter of bookmobile service would claim that fixed location agencies should be done away with. The bookmobile should be viewed as an adjunct to, rather than a substitute for, branch or central libraries. As such it *has* its place.

Not all public libraries need bookmobiles and certainly their usefulness is greater under certain local conditions than it is in others. Generally speaking those libraries with large service areas and a relatively low population density will benefit most from bookmobiles, at least for adult usage. County and regional libraries are conspicuous examples. If a library proposes to serve elementary and high school age patrons at their schools the criteria of large areas and low population density assume less importance. Even medium-sized cities will normally have enough schools within their boundaries to keep at least one bookmobile busy.

The reader will note in the preceding paragraph that library service is described as being provided for elementary and high school age patrons at—not to—the schools. The choice of words is deliberate. The writer is unalterably opposed, unless the costs are underwritten

by the schools, to providing school library service through a local public library.

The St. Louis County Library, which has provided bookmobile service at both public and parochial schools since its establishment, has strongly maintained an important distinction despite efforts to persuade the County Library to give school library service as such. This distinction is that all transactions are with individual students and teachers. The only reason service is provided at schools is because these locations provide concentrations of potential patrons.

In actuality the County Library's service is of considerable value to the school people despite this philosophy of service. Teachers may and in many instances do request books by subject or author and title for use in connection with study units. Students do the same when they need materials for the preparation of a paper or for some specific project. These are in all instances, however, treated as individual requests and the individuals borrowing the materials are held responsible.

Having taken note of some of the arguments concerning what are considered the inadequacies of bookmobiles let us turn now to their virtues. If, as the writer believes, one of the major problems of library operation is that of distribution, bookmobiles are certainly important to both the patron and the library. It seems incontestable that a bookmobile can reach more people more economically than a branch library involving the same capital outlay and equivalent maintenance costs. Bookmobile service also represents an immediate economy directly to the patron. The bookmobile stop is usually closer to the patron's home than his branch library or may be located at a shopping center which he frequents. Payment for public transportation or costs of operating the family car are often thus considerably reduced.

This is especially true of bookmobile service at schools. The child is at the bookmobile stop and the parents suffer no inconvenience whatsoever. Even if the child could reach a branch library under his own power there are today's ever present traffic hazards and the concern over possible injury. At the school bookmobile stop the young patron normally does not have to leave his fenced in school playground.

One of the time honored but nonetheless valid clichés of librarianship is that accessibility is a strong determinant in promoting books and reading. Surely, then, a bookmobile at a neighborhood stop or school leaves little to be desired when it comes to making a visit to the library painless.

Potentialities and Capabilities of Bookmobiles for Library Service

A rarely mentioned attribute of bookmobile service is its dramatic quality. Adults and children alike feel this attraction and respond positively. School administrators and teachers tell us often that books which stand neglected in classroom collections or in the library are borrowed avidly from the bookmobile.

Another, though perhaps secondary, virtue of the bookmobile is its public relations value. These units, brightly colorful in appearance and bearing appropriate insignia and slogan messages, making their appointed rounds are constant reminders of the local public library and its facilities.

It is the writer's opinion that library systems large enough to use several bookmobiles should give serious consideration to specialization. As an example, the St. Louis County Library uses three categories of mobile units: adult, high school, and juvenile. There are several distinct advantages in this type of operation. The most obvious is that through specialization the book collections become more adequate for the clientele served. This is especially true of the high school and juvenile units. With a large bookmobile carrying up to 3,500 books for teen agers and in excess of 4,000 for elementary school readers it is readily apparent that only a very large branch library would have a better collection. Another advantage in specialization is that the bookmobile staff also become specialists and are able to do a better job. This applies particularly to untrained employees.

To some extent the elementary school pupils are a captive group and the herd instinct no doubt plays a part in convincing the reluctant reader that it is the thing to do to borrow a few books. Since it has been rather generally agreed that junior and senior high school students are prone to lose the reading habit it seems logical to assume that bookmobile service helps to preserve continuity in the use of the library. In this instance the mountain comes to Mohammed and there is greater likelihood of the junior and senior high school student using a bookmobile at his doorstep than there is of his visiting a branch or central library.

Finally, at the risk of appearing a cynical opportunist, the author would like to point out a major advantage which accrues to the library through bookmobile service at schools. It is axiomatic that American parents will do virtually anything within reason to promote the real or fancied welfare of their children. Bookmobile service at schools falls into this category with a vengeance. Although many parents themselves would perhaps not wish to be found dead in

a library they have somehow and by someone been indoctrinated with the idea that reading library books is a wholesome and highly desirable occupation for their off-spring.

The St. Louis County Library in its nonage, when it did not have a single fixed location agency of any consequence, was saved from extinction in 1947 and 1948 successively. Opponents of the Library promoted elections in both of these years having as their purpose the elimination of the fledgling institution. They lost and it was the parents of the children who used the bookmobiles who undoubtedly saved the day. The bookmobiles provided a ready made means of distributing pro-library publicity materials and it was done without stint through the children who carried the literature home to their parents.

In 1955, when the Library had only one adequate branch, an appeal was made to the voters for an increase in the operation and maintenance tax and, in addition, for a five year building fund tax. Again the bookmobiles proved their worth and the election was won handily despite some fairly vitriolic newspaper opposition. To a great degree, as has been said, the St. Louis County Library was built by bookmobiles.

During the St. Louis County Library's early days of bookmobile operation and particularly with the first high school unit some effort was made to provide rudimentary reference service. It was a failure and has been largely abandoned. The people who use the adult units do not visit them to do research but simply to borrow books in the collection or leave requests for materials to be delivered on the next bookmobile visit.

While the high school units seemingly offered greater possibilities for reference service their method of operation precluded success. Students are sent to the bookmobile in groups by classes and are allowed specific periods of time in which to select their books. These short time periods coupled with the inevitable chaos and confusion arising from a gaggle of teen-agers in a confined area were hardly conducive to research. Hence, the reference service was discontinued and the schools are now expected to provide their own reference collections.

As a means of handling quick reference service and expediting special requests the staff of the library have toyed from time to time with thoughts of short wave radios and mobile telephones. The mobile telephone offers the greatest potential, but has seemed prohibitive in

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cost. Short wave radio, though less expensive per bookmobile unit, was ruled out because it was felt that staff and patrons alike would be maddened by the constant chit-chat which would be heard simultaneously on all mobile units. At the rate with which methods of communication are being changed and improved it is quite possible that something will come along in a few years to solve the problem. If and when that happens the efficiency of the mobile unit will be markedly increased.

Neither is it possible, because of space limitations, to do much with special collections. The alert bookmobile librarian will, of course, have small collections of certain seasonal and holiday materials available as common sense dictates, but can do little more.

One highly popular special service given by the adult bookmobiles of the St. Louis County Library is taking requests for phonograph records to be delivered when they become available. The mobile units carry no phonograph records as a part of their collections but do have catalogs which the patrons may consult and then place requests. Another special service rendered adult patrons is the delivery of films to the various stops. Patrons telephone the headquarters library, place their requests, and then pick them up at the most convenient location. This has proved highly popular.

Our adult units also carry a limited number of periodicals, mostly monthly publications, of the type which are not subject to rapid obsolescence. Examples are: *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Readers' Digest*, and *Popular Mechanics*. This service has been very well received.

One of the criticisms which has been leveled against bookmobiles is the inadequacy of assistance to the individual patron. Certainly it is true that on units giving service at schools the pace is frequently so frenzied that the staff do well to handle charge-outs and returns. On adult units, however, there is normally more time for advising and assisting readers in making their selections. As in any other type of public service agency, competence of personnel is the key factor. It is also felt that the teachers should assume some responsibility for the books their pupils borrow. An effort is made to encourage, not always with conspicuous success, as much teacher participation as possible.

For a last word anent the potentialities and capabilities of bookmobiles for library service a reiteration of what has been said above may be the best. Under proper local conditions and if intelligently

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operated bookmobiles can be extremely important, if not invaluable. Conversely, if the mobile units are too small, if their collections are inflexible, if the administration and staff take a dim view of their value or if the geographical situation does not warrant their use it is, no doubt, best to forget the whole thing. After all, as has been so often and so well said by so many wise men and women "the horse is here to stay."

Personnel and Bookmobile Service

RAYMOND E. WILLIAMS

PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOKMOBILE SERVICE is dependent to a large extent on the personnel given the responsibility for providing this specialized portion of the library's work. In very few other places in the library's personnel picture is it as important that the salesmanship of the librarian be as alert and as constant as it is in this service. With the very limited book collection, with a clientele that automatically creates pressure of time on the staff, with difficult working conditions as a normal part of their lot, they must bring a feeling of warmth and joy to their work which the physical facilities can do little to help. They must somehow provide a physical embodiment of the idea that the books they have are only the beginning of untold dimensions of knowledge and information and of creative leisure. They must be able to work successfully and almost instantaneously with the tremendous range in age and reading level among their patrons.

In more cases than not, the librarian will be working with young readers, whether the bookmobile has stopped at a community station or near a school facility. But, within seconds his book knowledge may be called upon to sweep from Wanda Gag to Spinoza, and his response to the readers' need must be as perceptive in the latter as in the former. This places a tremendous responsibility on the bookmobile staff and on the people who are responsible for planning for the integration of this service with the other parts of library service.

Again and again experience with bookmobiles indicates that the circulation for home use from a fully staffed vehicle is at least equivalent to that of a medium-sized branch in a normal city system. In Minneapolis, for example, circulation from bookmobiles will run between 110,000 and 150,000 volumes per year, while the medium-sized branches will loan approximately the same number of books during the same period. Yet the normal personnel for a bookmobile

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to provide this service is one, or in times of emergency two, librarians, one or two clerks, and a driver-clerk. They will be called upon to handle an average circulation load of about 275 books in an average stop of two and a half hours and to maintain a standard of response equivalent to that of a branch with a staff of seven to ten. Therefore, in the selection of the personnel for the bookmobile service, the normal criteria include previous experience in the library and a proven ability to handle information and book requests capably.

There are other attributes which are of tremendous importance in the selection and organization of the bookmobile staff. It is necessary for the staff of four or perhaps five to work closely and intimately under trying conditions, both winter and summer, in spite of noise, hubbub and movement, and to enjoy it enough to be on speaking terms with one another at the close of the day. Personality traits of the individual are of tremendous importance.

Another characteristic important in the bookmobile staff is flexibility. The hallmark of modern librarianship seems to be change. Bookmobiles are subject to sudden and dramatic schedule changes, and the staff must be ready to join in their stride with other crews, or change vehicles on short notice, or man an emergency station wagon replacing a disabled bookmobile. Many libraries now are using four crews to man three bookmobiles, or three crews to man two bookmobiles in order to extend the road time of these vehicles. This is an excellent system but requires a very flexible approach to librarianship on the part of the total crew involved in the bookmobile service.

There is a changing emphasis in bookmobile service throughout the country which is resulting from a number of major shifts in the service pattern for library materials. School libraries are maturing rapidly, and this is to be applauded. With collections having a definite purpose, it is no longer necessary for libraries to equate the providing of a book with the provision of library service. Materials are becoming less expensive in relation to other parts of library operations so that where a few years ago it was enough to provide a missionary-kind of library service from public library bookmobiles to school facilities, library collections for school use now may be expected to reflect the real needs of the school program. As has been noted, school libraries are growing stronger and stronger, and public libraries in their mobile service are devoting more and more of their energies to public library service for the community as a

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whole. This is to be encouraged by both public library and school authorities. Therefore, it is no accident that the school stops for public library bookmobiles are becoming less frequent, that community stops grow in number, and that adult service librarians are joining their colleagues in the children's service in providing this mobile extension of branch service.

But, if ever library service loses its missionary zeal, it would be a sad day for our culture and the future of our education for freedom. One of the strongest evidences of the exploding growth of the American public library is that which is embodied in the wonderful spirit of its bookmobile librarians.

Bookmobile Operations and the Library System

IRWIN O. SEXTON

CHANGING PATTERNS is the keynote of mobile library service, and this flexibility provides all librarians with a truly versatile tool for better service. The whole library system is quickly drawn into the picture with the acquisition, or even the contemplated acquisition, of one mobile unit.

Business failures throughout the United States run into the thousands each year, and one of the chief reasons for this is the lack of initial planning and investigation. Libraries seldom go bankrupt, but costly failures do occur in extending service because of negligent planning. To further guarantee success, work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioners, and other local groups who can offer tangible help. Just because mobile library locations can be changed is no excuse for a hit or miss location of stops. Actually, preplanning may reveal better ways of providing service than by using bookmobiles. For example, books by mail might provide even better service at a lower cost in some sparsely settled or remote areas. Sears, Montgomery Ward, and other mail order houses have found this method effective. With merchants providing floor space for the catalog case and with the use of simplified forms this type of service could work.

Essential to all planning for and initiation of service are detailed maps. Local planning bodies, engineering offices, or the Board of Education may already have valuable information showing population by area, traffic flow, and natural barriers, but if this is not readily available then it must be prepared by the library staff from the latest census reports. Utilize every resource to aid in graphically clarifying the needs and requirements of those individuals to be served. Remember

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ber too that mobile service can be helpful in testing reader potential for the determination of future branch sites.

Checking details before and during the establishment and operation of bookmobile service is an endless task, but the competent administrator can through delegation locate the problem areas and formulate policy to aid in their solution. To help in the over-all planning the following check list of factors to be considered is presented.

Determining in advance the total effect of bookmobile service on the rest of the system is not always possible, but the administration needs to be aware and alert to the gradual or sometimes radical shifts in staff requirements. If the bookmobile, for example, draws large numbers of children in the summer months with a resulting lack of patronage at other agencies, then some staff from these agencies could be temporarily transferred to the bookmobile for the summer months. An unexpectedly heavy usage of the bookmobile might well result in a depleted book stock. If this occurs some shifts in departmental or agency book budgets to the mobile unit might prove necessary.

Foremost among the problems to be solved before the mobile units go into operation is scheduling. Not only a matter of geography and population centers, scheduling must also take into consideration service to special groups or organizations. The possibility of service at schools will immediately present itself. Even in areas where public schools have libraries there is a question of supplementing the library collections for private and parochial schools, but adherence to the public library standards recommends that service directly to schools should be avoided unless additional funds are made available for this service. Sometimes, however, librarians are required to provide this type of service as a means of expediting the over-all library program. An effective way to assist schools and at the same time maintain public library standards is to provide the same type of book collection as would normally be available at a community stop. Every effort should be made not to yield to local pressures in purchasing books to specifically supplement the school curriculum. The mobile unit's policy toward schools will, of course, be influenced by the library's over-all policy. As in other problem areas preplanning for the bookmobile can help the administrator to reevaluate and perhaps redefine over-all policy.

Balancing the bookmobile's book collection presents an interesting challenge, for a fluid book collection is essential to all mobile library operation. An attempt to maintain a separate collection for mobile

libraries invariably will result in high overhead. A small permanent collection of standard titles for adults, children, and young people can logically be made a part of the mobile library's stock, but even this should be kept general. By making mobile libraries an integral part of the library system it is then possible to borrow heavily from main and branch libraries to make every book in the system actively available for mobile library users. This admittedly involves manpower and a keen awareness in the mobile library staff of the total library collection. Routines of handling bulk transfers of books have been handled in many different ways, but Topeka, Kansas, library has probably achieved the ultimate. Their mobile library loading dock is built to permit book trucks to be rolled from the loading platform into the mobile library. The complete changing of the total book stock can be accomplished in minutes.

Where major shifting of the mobile collection is impossible there are alternative methods to insure a fluid collection. At least one section on the bookmobile should be reserved as a rotating subject section. This will permit the library staff to easily introduce mobile library users to the total scope of the library's collection. Picture and easy books likewise need to be changed often, for young readers can quickly read through a large number of titles. Changing the collection is simply handled in library systems with large numbers of mobile units by rotating the vehicles that serve a given area, but even the smallest of units can enrich their collection by changing one small box of titles each day. The gradual shift of titles from one stop to another also adds to the usefulness of each book. One title can circulate several times in one location before it remains on the bookmobile to go on to the next stop. This natural rotating requires no effort from the librarian, but awareness and alertness is necessary. It also follows that new books should not be added on a certain fixed day and stop.

Administration policy is essential in those systems where a large loan of books from other agencies in the system will be required for the stocking of bookmobiles. This type of loan must be clearly understood by all members of the library staff, for without complete cooperation much dissatisfaction can develop. As better service to the general public is the desired goal, those directly responsible for maintaining the book collection should be brought in to discuss and formulate the basic principles involved.

The mechanics of handling such large loans must also be worked

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out carefully to provide necessary information to all concerned. This in itself can do much to prevent any staff resentment. Time limits for these loans should also be established with a simple, but workable follow-up procedure. Varying methods have been used for the handling of this type of loan, but essential to all of them is simplicity. Only that information which is vital to the smooth operation of the library should be recorded and ideally no records at all need to be kept. This is possible if the borrowed books are simply stamped with the date when they should be returned to the lending department or agency. This procedure may sometimes be frustrating to the lender, but most other systems become extremely involved in detail and the expense rises accordingly.

Because of budget and space, book selection is a limited but a highly necessary and important activity for mobile library service. All book selection tools should be routed to bookmobile personnel. These, if possible, should be marked to indicate the items which have been selected for purchase within the system. This will permit the mobile library staff to keep abreast of current publications, and to see what is being purchased. The mobile library staff should be included in book meetings if they are a part of the library's program. The general book selection policy used to guide those responsible for book selection should, of course, apply also to the mobile library personnel. The procedures used by the mobile library in purchasing and selecting can be the same as those used by branches. The total dollar figures for bookmobile books bears little or no relationship to the total library's book expenditure, for the very nature of the mobile library service involves heavy interchange of books from other agencies.

Paperback books are one means by which the mobile library can increase their subject coverage as well as the total number of titles. Even if not generally used by the system, it would be well to consider them for mobile use. Present day techniques make the reinforced paperback durable for mobile library use, while at the same time shelf space is saved.

Whether or not to buy prebound children's books is already a matter of established policy in most libraries. If the library does not, it might well reconsider the problem when planning for mobile libraries. Buying prebound or having publishers' bindings replaced on children's easy and picture books frequently justifies the additional expenditure, but in many instances the publishers' library binding is durable enough

to withstand fifty or sixty circulations. Prebound books are not essential, but their durability has many advantages.

If space is available books relating to sex and marriage should be included among the mobile library's regular collection. No special housing should be required. However, the collection must be extremely well chosen and only a representative collection needs to be included. These remarks might well apply to other subject areas as well. The point to remember is that the mobile unit's collection should be a well balanced one and certainly not devoted solely to books for recreational reading.

The inclusion of magazines on bookmobiles is rarely done although successfully used by the St. Louis County Library as described by S. W. Smith, elsewhere in this issue. There are several reasons why this material does not lend itself to this kind of service. The space required simply is not available. Many librarians feel that the short life of a given magazine does not justify the space required. The preparation time can not be justified and the back issues are for all practical purposes useless once they have been removed from the unit.

Attempting to provide reference service on a mobile library can be extremely frustrating for the librarian involved. Because of lack of time and space not more than one shelf of reference tools should be carried. A *World Almanac*, a one volume encyclopedia, a dictionary, a book of quotations, a state historical guide, an atlas, and such other reference tools as seem desirable to the librarian should be included on the one shelf. Answers to requests for information not carried on mobile libraries can be delivered at a future date, or they can be mailed directly to the individual desiring the information. Where periodical articles are involved the library's photographic service could be utilized.

The method of taking requests on mobile units varies. Some librarians prefer taking a written request for materials, while others ask the patron to phone their request to the main library. In the latter instance the proper department prepares the necessary material and routes it to the mobile library's headquarters for delivery at the designated area stop. Reference service can not be ignored nor taken too lightly, for frequently the mobile library is the only library facility for many miles and the only contact the patron has with library services. Any method of providing reference service should also allow time for the staff to prepare it. If the mobile library staff handles this, then sufficient time must be given for them to be in the library. If

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the main library staff handles mobile library requests, then in all probability this work can be done in a routine manner at slack times.

Presumably all services of the library are available to mobile library patrons, however, the library administration should ascertain the feasibility of providing for delivery of items not normally carried on the mobile units. Where space permits phonograph records are sometimes carried as a regular item though more often are considered a special service. A test shelf of records would quickly indicate borrower interest. This could be expanded into one shelf for adults and one shelf for children's records.

Framed pictures as a special service could present a problem in bulk that would hamper normal public service. Pamphlet materials can be handled in the same way as is used throughout the library system. A one or two drawer vertical file can be used or two shelves of the regular book shelving can be adopted for the file folders especially made for this purpose. Even a limited pamphlet area is useful because all items included can be both valuable for information and popular in reading appeal. Films usually are scheduled for twenty-four hour loans and thus do not lend themselves as a mobile service. However, occasionally as a convenience to borrowers films could be either delivered or picked up in this manner in cooperation with the film department. The pickup of ceiling book projectors at mobile stops could be handled by mobile units, but only if the staff and space requirements can justify this very specialized service. A well formulated administration policy on special materials will provide the mobile staff with a set of guides to ease their decision making while giving public service.

Policies in public libraries differ widely on the use of signs to guide patrons to different subject areas. The over-all policy of the library will usually prevail on a mobile unit. However, even if signs are not generally used circumstances may require special provisions for extremely busy bookmobile operations. Where every available source of assistance is required for the provision of minimum service then perhaps signs could help to alleviate some of the congestion. Today attractive durable plastic signs are available for a relatively small cost. These are particularly helpful, in fact necessary, where books are shelved by reader interest. Parents and children alike frequently are confused if children's books are not marked as to school grade. However, librarians are reluctant to limit and restrict a book's use through this narrow classification. In all probability, the question

of designating the reading level of books should be appraised and evaluated by any library providing bookmobile service, for unless the mobile staff is able to give total reading guidance additional aids will be required. The public is entitled to an explanation of any procedure that is designated to simplify service.

Local situations will, in all probability, be the chief governing factor in the establishment of a policy of story hours from mobile units. Story hours have been successfully held under trees, or in the shade of the unit itself, or in nearby buildings. The traditional value of the story hour should be weighed carefully with both past and present experience being considered, for mobile service should attempt to provide every library service that can logically be offered. This is particularly true where library users have no contact with library service other than through mobile units.

The following paragraph is only for those administrators and children's librarians who believe in summer reading games and the discussion is primarily limited to those individuals who believe that a summer reading game must require either an oral or written report! If this type of program is scheduled for any part of the library system then it must automatically include the mobile units. Here conceivably, a problem will develop for large numbers of children at any one location can present the staff with an impossible service situation. Some libraries have solved this problem through the use of volunteer staff to do the clerical routines, thus freeing the trained librarian to broaden her service program.

Although most librarians have discarded the ribbon shelving of children's non-fiction on the top shelves and children's fiction on the bottom shelves, this system should not be discarded without some consideration for bookmobile use. A slight adaptation could place adult books on the top shelves and children's books on the lower shelves. Such an arrangement would permit all books to be within easy reach for both adults and children.

Bookmobiles offer a special, if not a romantic appeal to both adults and children, therefore, volunteer help is often available and with a minimum amount of training this free assistance can be valuable to the total library system. Unfortunately, indiscriminate use of volunteers without preliminary training can be hazardous. All volunteers must realize their importance to the successful bookmobile operation, for failure of volunteers to meet a schedule can be disastrous.

The flexibility of mobile libraries presents an ideal opportunity to

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provide direct service to specialized groups such as business and labor. Bookmobile stops, for example, have proved successful in Kansas City at a large steel mill and a steel fabrication plant. The principle upon which this service was established is sound, for it provided the machinery necessary for giving direct service to a group that is sometimes difficult to reach. Arrangements for the service were made jointly with both labor and management. One section of book shelving was devoted to books of interest to men and specifics relating to their job, promotion possibilities, and hobbies. Management was amazed to find their employees avoided mysteries and westerns. When the service was organized management was fearful that employees would be borrowing this type of material and reading it on company time. Their concern could have materialized, but it did not. The service was appreciated by both management and labor, and the results were quite satisfying to the library administrator. However, each library administrator must decide for himself whether or not he is justified in using this direct approach. Some administrators will place this service in the same category as direct service to schools, while others will accept it as a means of expanding and extending library service in areas that can benefit tremendously from the use of books.

Other specialized groups which might receive direct service from the mobile library are homes for the aged and orphanages. If the stops are open to anyone in the area then certainly this specialized service can be justified. This justification, however, would preclude serving such institutions that are completely isolated from the general public. The library needs of the community and the library's financial ability to meet these needs will probably combine to be the determining factor as to how much and what kind of service can be provided.

Mobile units can be adapted, where schedules permit, to service deposit collections, but the administration must work out all details for a smooth operation. Will the collections for the deposit stations be chosen by the extension division? Will the books be selected from the mobile library's stock? These are only two of the many questions which have to be answered. Lines of responsibility and authority should be clearly drawn and the mechanics of servicing should be simplified as much as possible if the decision is made to let the mobile library handle the servicing of stations.

Serving areas with a low standard of living requires much patience on the part of the library staff, and the full cooperation of the library administration. In these areas children frequently are not

taught at home about the care that is necessary in handling library books. New books frequently come back marked, smudged, and torn. Here, too, there is a high percentage of overdue books. Despite these factors service to these areas is essential to our social development and the rewards for giving this service far outweigh any disadvantages. Frequently librarians are tempted to overstock on light and ephemeral books in providing this service. It is not necessary, although certainly some of these materials should be included. In serving this group as any other the librarian has an obligation to provide books suitable to the educational level of the individual borrowers. In this work, the lack of simply written material in many fields of interest is keenly felt.

Circulation procedures pose questions for the administrator as well as the staff. Is uniformity throughout the library system important or can mobile units differ is the basic one. Established procedures can cause complications. For example, in Oklahoma City two mobile units were acquired on a minimum budget. To put these bookmobiles in operation books were borrowed from the main library and branches with the hope and expectation of using hand charging, but this was not practical since the system had previously adopted a microfilming charge system which eliminated all book cards. The job of securing duplicated book cards severely limited the flexibility of the rapidly expanding program so the Wayne County charging system was considered. Here, there was fear (which was later justified) that sufficient floor space was not available for patron preparation of the charge slips. The problem was solved by renting the necessary microfilming equipment.

Helen Geer discusses seventeen different charging systems in her book¹ and since its publication there have been other systems devised and put into operation by public libraries. Any of these can be made to work effectively on a mobile unit if it is fast enough to handle the volume.

Charging systems that require slipping of books can slow down the return of the books to the shelves and in effect restrict the workable collection on the mobile unit, but where the volume of business is not great the problem of slipping becomes negligible.

Circulation statistics do not necessarily need to reflect the types of books borrowed, but a spot check should be made at least once a year. Capable librarians can very accurately gauge the use of their materials, but the yearly check will involve very little effort and it is a sound procedure. Circulation and other statistics should prob-

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ably be uniform with other agencies in the system in order to contribute to the library's statistical picture.

If borrowers' identification cards are used they should either be mailed or issued on the spot to bookmobile users. This simplifies the problem of carrying on the mobile units large quantities of unclaimed cards. The expenditure for the mailing fee is negligible in the light of the good will it promotes and the savings in time for the bookmobile staff. Here too the total library system is affected for if cards are mailed from the mobile units they must also be mailed to branch library patrons. The problem with branch patrons conceivably is not as critical because of the longer hours of opening, but at least the service of mailing the card should be available to any resident who desires it. The cost for 10,000 cards will amount to \$400 in postage alone, but the filing and reclaiming of 10,000 cards could easily cost over four cents each.

Fines in general should be uniform throughout the entire library system. If it is an accepted premise that fines are a penalty for failure to keep within the restrictions as outlined by the library administration, then the individual should be held responsible for each day that he has books overdue. This may seem harsh in areas where only weekly or longer mobile service is available, but any change from the system's fine policy for mobile units might very well adversely affect the patron's attitudes when he borrows books from other agencies in the library system. However, each library administration can, at its discretion, set different standards of fines for different types of service, (i.e.) some libraries charge two, three or five cents a day for main library books and a flat rate of five or ten cents for each scheduled stop missed on the mobile library. Fines are primarily designed to encourage the return of books and the return of books is essential to the successful operation of a mobile library operating on a limited stock. Mobile units frequently lack staff and time to pursue overdue books as is done in main libraries and branches, and the daily fine provides an incentive for prompt return of library materials.

Today practically all library systems permit the return of material at any outlet. This policy can be complicated with mobile service because of the storage problem, but the convenience to the patron will offset any difficulties.

Protecting library books in bad weather is the responsibility of the borrower, but some libraries have found paper sacks, specially printed paper bags, and even newspapers worth-while accessories

on bookmobiles. This service can be justified by considering the necessity for the patron to leave the bookmobile once books have been selected.

A keen awareness of community growth and development is particularly important to all bookmobile librarians, for both rural and urban populations are constantly changing. This shifting is sometimes dramatic and obvious, but frequently it is subtle and difficult to detect. The alert library staff must not only be prepared for the changes and the resulting change in scheduling, but they also can prepare their borrowers for necessary changes.

Each community should develop its own criteria as to what constitutes a valid stop. Schedules should constantly be re-evaluated and re-appraised in view of these criteria. There may be extenuating circumstances justifying the continuance of service which does not meet the system's general requirements, but this fact should be recognized by the total system when it exists.

There are several ways in which a stop can be changed. The time of the stop can be lengthened or shortened; the period of the day can be shifted as little as an hour or two hours and still make a significant change in the results. A major shift from morning to afternoon or evening can open new possibilities for patronage. Changing the day or frequency of the stop can likewise affect the results. Also, the effectiveness of the publicity program can easily influence the stop status.

Few changes in the scheduling of fixed units such as branches are made in most systems, but the mobile library units might perhaps be subject to more changes. For example, some mobile libraries have different winter and summer schedules. There may be areas where this is advantageous, but where possible a set mobile library schedule is preferable. The changing of schedules each season of the year will confuse many borrowers, while the stability of one schedule will instill confidence and encourage regular use. Scheduling around legal holidays is a problem that has to be faced by the mobile library, as well as the total library system. If done on an annual basis so that patrons are given advance notification, poor public relations can be avoided.

In some localities mobile service can be interrupted during Christmas week for major service and overhaul of the mobile units, but normally these maintenance procedures can be incorporated into the regular service schedule. The administration has the responsibility

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for determining how much and what kind of maintenance service is available for mobile libraries late at night and on Sundays. All night servicing of units or Sunday mechanical work, even at a time and a half expenditure, is definitely desirable over an interruption in service. Large cities present a hazard to moving mobile units during rush hours. Where practical changes in location should be scheduled to avoid this complication.

How long should a stop be? The answer to the question is dependent upon the population of the area served. Stops have been known to be ten to fifteen minutes in length and in other instances are expanded to a day or two days. An isolated city housing area can be adequately served in forty-five minutes. A small rural community might complete their book transactions in twenty minutes, while a stop at a major location in the city could take all day to serve its residents.

Reader interest should also be considered in determining the length of a given stop, for frequently the mobile library staff is the only contact that some individuals have with books and with people who are interested in books and reading. Caution: this interest should not be confused with the intentions of those individuals who simply like to visit.

The scheduling of all stops should take into consideration the hours that will best suit the time available for the people in a given community. Children obviously can not use the bookmobile if it arrives only when they are in school, and areas that serve working parents will receive little use if the bookmobile arrives in the morning or afternoon. Service to retired citizens can best be accomplished by morning and afternoon stops, but few areas will fall completely within this classification.

Determining the area served by a given stop can easily cause confusion, for today ardent library users will not hesitate to drive their automobiles a considerable distance to secure books from two or three different locations. Quantity of public transportation can also affect a stop. Experience with the individual community can in some measure govern the estimate for the area to be served by a single bookmobile stop. Knowing the driving habits and reader interest can sometimes be of help, but there is no set rule for predetermining the exact area.

Evening stops are usually quite popular in urban areas and they are desirable because of the increased possibility for family use. Morn-

ing and afternoon bookmobile stops are the most difficult to plan. If the units are parked near schools with teachers and students making frequent or regular visits and the collection is stocked with supplementary curriculum materials this is providing school service. This is not necessarily undesirable for sometimes there is a distinct advantage in offering public library service with the cooperation of school people. Morning stops are frequently slow, but in certain types of areas they can be quite productive. Mothers with small children, for example, find that the morning service does not interfere with nap time.

Rural salesmen frequently discover that they must call on a customer who is in an isolated area and a man on commission is reluctant to spend his time on a prospect that might not be able to pay his own way. This situation can also affect bookmobile library service, for travel time of two hours to service a very small group of people can not only deprive others of better service, but it also can be very expensive to the library. The library administration must therefore consider all factors in mapping the initial inclusion of isolated areas.

Parking on public and private property and broad insurance coverage will immediately concern the library administration in the legal responsibility for operating mobile units. Insurance coverage will depend on the library's governing unit, but regardless of how insurance is handled there must be arrangements made for meeting all possible situations. The bookmobile, while in transit, must be covered and the public making use of the facilities likewise needs some protection. The limits of liability must, of course, conform with state requirements.

When parking the unit on private property the library can be requested to sign a release agreement with the property owner. Such an agreement is primarily designed to free the property owner of any responsibility of damage to property or individuals using this library facility while it is on his land. Such an agreement could expedite the securing of authorization of using private parking lots for library purposes. Local law enforcement officers should be contacted for authorization and clearance for the use of limited parking or restricted parking areas, and for overnight parking of book trailers. In some locations restrictions and limits are waived for library use, but in others strict adherence to the law is demanded.

Bookmobile headquarters have been established in practically every conceivable manner and place. Ideally, they should be located in a relatively large area and situated near the center of the area to be

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served. Bookmobile routes can, in most instances, be the chief governing factor in the location of the headquarters. The requirements of the headquarters itself will depend upon the size of operation. There should be storage space for books. There must be sufficient work space for the clerical operations, and there needs to be parking space for the bookmobile itself. In the simplest terms this is all that is required.

In the matter of dress for mobile staff there might conceivably be an exception to the total system's requirements. Weather conditions frequently necessitate warmer dress or cooler dress than is required in a large library building. This situation has been simplified in the St. Louis County Library by the use of summer and winter uniforms for the bookmobile library staff. They are both neat and attractive and worth the added cost although staff members sometimes resent wearing uniforms provided by the library system. Normal good taste is expected in the appearance of all of the staff. The rag-bag appearance obviously is not acceptable, although the informal atmosphere of the mobile library may influence the staff to relax their standards of dress.

Housing for bookmobiles is not essential to their operation just as a garage is not essential to an automobile, but the added protection can extend the life of the mobile unit enough to justify even rented housing. In addition to protecting the unit itself there is an added advantage of simplifying the staff's problems of working with the units when they are not on the road. Housing, however, is not necessary if large expenditures are involved or if the unit can only be housed on weekends.

In very large rural areas over-night lodging of the bookmobile staff provides the best answer to continued and uninterrupted library service, but there must be a clear statement of policy about the provision for adequate quarters with expenditures prepaid for all staff members involved.

Providing in advance for emergency repairs and substitution for illness of drivers and staff can, on occasion, save much time and energy. The inconvenience and disappointment to the library patron when a scheduled stop is missed can sometimes be explained, but through careful planning the necessity of an explanation can be avoided.

As for repairs, the mobile library staff should be authorized to make expenditures not exceeding a figure set by the library admin-

istration for emergency repairs. Preplanning in this area will permit the mobile unit staff to act with some dispatch. This figure should provide for minor repairs and assistance in getting the unit started.

Staff substitutions for emergencies can be handled most easily at the headquarters location. Obviously, not all emergencies can be handled by such a policy, but the bulk of this kind of problem can be met with very little thought. The work week for the bookmobile staff is no different than assigning a reference librarian to a public service desk.

Should the bookmobile librarian be expected to spend all of his time on the unit in direct service or should time be allocated for other library work? The answer here is not simple, for ideally bookmobile librarians need to have a breadth of experience far greater than simply providing books to bookmobile patrons. Staff limitations both in quantity and quality complicate the length of assignments, but even in restricted areas there should be a set plan for exchange of headquarters and mobile staff assignments.

Communications from headquarters to the mobile unit can be simplified by arranging to have on file the telephone number of the telephone nearest to the bookmobile stop. This list of telephone numbers should not be used indiscriminately, but the list should be available to all individuals who will have need for it. Two way radio communication has worked out satisfactorily in those areas where money is available and the installation of a regular telephone is also possible, but again the expense is high.

Technical processes will not be particularly involved in the establishment or the operation of mobile library service, for few if any changes will be necessary above and beyond the standard library procedures. The administration must, however, determine whether or not duplicate book cards are needed. The extent of the headquarters card catalog and shelf list requirement should ascertain the need for card catalogs and/or shelf list on the mobile units themselves.

Embarrassment to the administration and staff can easily be the end result if detailed planning is not a permanent part of the total operation. For example, a portable radio playing rock and roll and a half filled coffee cup will not impress the general public with the serious purpose of library service. Establishing policy for the mobile library system in the greatest of detail is extremely practical and worth-while. The constant pursuit and follow-up of all phases in the

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total library system's operation will produce for the library and the public excellent results without confusion.

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Selection of the Bookmobile

PAUL H. WYER

MOST CITY AND COUNTY LIBRARIES reach a stage when it is advisable to extend services beyond their present facilities. Most of these libraries turn to the bookmobile as the desired medium. Since most librarians have never experienced the challenge of selecting a bookmobile, the problem is completely strange. Even those librarians operating bookmobiles are faced with different conditions when the time arrives to select their second, third, or fourth unit.

There are three major subjects to consider: the selection of the new unit itself, its operation, and its replacement. The selection of the unit itself has to do with size, equipment, and cost; operation has to do with cost and maintenance; replacement has to do with size, obsolescence, or deterioration.

First as to the selection of the unit itself. One of the most important features is the matter of size. In the past most thoughts were turned to "how many books will it carry" but in the last few years it has switched to "the area of workable floor space." This has been brought to light from experience. With adequate room to work, bookmobile personnel can be more efficient and are able to accommodate more patrons in a shorter time, affording more time to re-shelve returned books.

The quantity of volumes is possibly the second most important consideration. Needs will vary depending upon the density of population, how frequently the bookmobile can be serviced from its source of supply, and the type of service it will give. When serving schools it must be remembered that the patrons come in large numbers and there is no time to re-shelve returned books so the larger the book capacity the better. An adult stop is usually less concentrated with a more steady stream of patrons over a longer period with less relative space for books alone needed. On the other hand a combination school and adult bookmobile needs to be stocked with a larger num-

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ber of volumes because it is expected to offer two entirely different selections of books.

Some attention should be given to the width of the unit where it will be used in areas with exceptionally narrow roads and to height in localities where it will be necessary to go through underpasses of below normal dimensions or must fit into a certain garage. Most bookmobiles do not exceed an over-all height of ten feet, six inches.

When selecting a bookmobile it is wise to take inventory of the expected road conditions. This is especially true in counties where there are load restrictions especially in the spring thaw season. There have been a few isolated cases where it was necessary to build a bookmobile under the maximum over-all limitation at the sacrifice of floor space inside. However, a bookmobile will be capable of traveling on roads that accommodate school buses.

Once the size is determined then the type may be selected. The conventional type will accommodate a body of ten to sixteen feet, the inside working space behind the driver's seat. The forward control type, sometimes referred to as the parcel delivery type, will accommodate a ten to twenty foot body. The transit forward control type will accommodate a twenty-two to a thirty foot body. These terms are current in the United States and Canada. For the usage in other parts of the world see S. H. Horrocks and J. A. Hargreaves' chapter elsewhere in this issue.

The next item for consideration is the equipment on the bookmobile including shelving, desks, electric power, heat, light, ventilation, air conditioning, chassis, and a number of convenience accessories. The arrangement of shelving should be seriously considered and well planned. Most adults will not browse the bottom shelf, hence this shelf is usually planned for children. Children's books, including flats, should not be shelved close to the circulation desk to avoid congestion and interference to those wishing to check-in or check-out books.

One or two sections at least should be fitted with adjustable shelves. Shelf height is limited in a mobile unit to control the exterior over-all height. Nine and three-fourths inches clearance between shelves has been found to be generally satisfactory in that it will accommodate a large majority of books. This shelf height will permit seven shelves high with an inside height of six feet, ten inches from the floor to the ceiling, a comfortable height for most patrons. Through trial and error it has been determined that the side shelving should slope fifteen

degrees and the shelving on the rear wall twenty degrees. The twenty degrees on the rear wall becomes necessary in case of sudden stop.

The standard shelving should be seven inches deep, which experience shows will accommodate nearly all books. If the shelves are deeper the books slide to the back of the shelf and it is difficult to read the titles. At the rear of the shelves should be a perpendicular back so that the books will rest on the full edge of the book rather than on the upper corner causing excessive book wear. There should be provisions for children's flats. Such shelving should be approximately twelve inches high by eleven inches deep with dividers approximately every eight inches. These shelves can also be used for phonograph records, especially with the addition of extra dividers. In the planning of shelving provision should be made, when needed, for films, filmstrips, projector, screen, magazine racks, and card catalog. Keep in mind that the proper planning for the arrangement of the shelving will make easier work for the bookmobile librarian.

At present wood and steel are the two materials from which shelving is made. Wood has become more acceptable because of its warmth, quietness while in motion, durability and maintenance. Steel shelving has a tendency to be cold in appearance. Some steel shelving in a mobile unit will have a tendency to sag over a period of time. Steel shelving also requires paint which will need refinishing more frequently than natural finished wood.

The choice of wood is frequently a desire of the individual. It may be poplar which is light in weight and finishes in a blond tone. Oak may be finished natural or with a limed finish. Wild cherry and birch finished natural have an excellent tone but are in a higher price bracket. Regardless of the choice of wood, it should be finished natural for the longest preservation.

Provision for returned books is extremely important when planning the desks even at the sacrifice of shelving space. When the traffic in the bookmobile is heavy it becomes extremely difficult to work with the desk covered with returned books. There is usually more space available for ledges and tables at the front and for this reason most bookmobiles are set up for the return of books there. This desk should be from twenty-four to thirty inches wide with all the counter space possible adjacent to this desk so long as it does not interfere with traffic. It is frequently advisable especially in units used for stops at schools to extend the desk to the rear along the wall even though some shelf space is sacrificed. Some librarians prefer to have the books

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returned at the rear. If this arrangement is selected, make certain that adequate space has been planned for returned books.

Both front and rear desks should be constructed of material to match or blend with the shelving. It is advisable to have the desk top covered with formica for long service. Mouldings around the edge of desks and ledges have been eliminated because of injury to clothing. The edges should be covered with the same formica as the top of the desk. Care should be taken that other portions of the desk do not have sharp corners on which to snag hosiery. It is advisable to have the front of the desk constructed of peg-board material extending to within three or four inches above the floor. This will give adequate circulation of air so that warm air from the heater will circulate behind the desk and cold air will not be trapped at this point. The exception to this is when a bookmobile is heated with electricity and a base board heater is installed behind the desk. The front of the desk should also slope downward to the inside of the desk to protect the front from being marred.

The arrangement of desk fittings such as drawers, shelving, money tray, card trays, and charging machine space should be worked out with the sales engineer assisting in the planning of the bookmobile. The seat for the front desk, normally the driver's seat, swivels through three hundred sixty degrees (one complete turn). If it is the type of desk that extends completely across the front of the bookmobile then the rider seat may be the same type as the driver's seat. The seat for the rear desk may be of the bench type with a lazy back or in most cases it is a stenographic type or posture chair which is more flexible and easy to adjust to the individual. It is advisable that a draft gate or some similar arrangement be installed to protect the personnel at the desk from drafts entering the bookmobile when the exterior doors are opened.

A clothes locker and some cupboard space for supplies are necessary. However, caution should be exercised, because in a number of instances this writer has examined bookmobiles after they have been in operation for a period of time and found that the excess cupboard space was filled with old newspapers and junk. Bulletin boards may be located on the front of cupboard doors, the locker door, above the rear window, above the windshield, on blank wall spaces and above patron doors.

Some smaller bookmobiles find it convenient to have a portable desk that hooks on to the shelving in the rear at a standing height. It be-

comes convenient when two people are working in the bookmobile at a very busy stop. When this desk is not needed it may be stored in the clothes locker. The arrangement and construction of the patron door may include some advantages and conveniences. In the first place the door should be so constructed that it will not sag throughout the life of the bookmobile. Primarily this is done by the correct framing of the door opening and the use of the proper hinge which should be a heavy duty piano type hinge with a brass pin to prevent binding.

A large glass area provides vision into the unit for patrons and makes them feel welcome. It also provides vision for the bookmobile personnel to see patrons approaching the unit. The exterior handle should be of the recessed type so that it is not easy to knock off. Easily grasped handrails should be provided on the inside of the door constructed of stainless steel rather than chrome-plated steel because the latter deteriorates rather rapidly from perspiration. The door should be similar to the commercial type door in a building, without a latch, and should be equipped with an automatic door closer to eliminate the necessity of attending the door. It will also eliminate the possibility of a strong wind slamming the door closed suddenly. The door hinge should be covered with Naugahyde, or some other heavy duty plastic so that when the door closes it is not possible for anyone to injure his fingers at the hinge. Most bookmobiles have an exterior folding step to be used where there is no curb. This step should be equipped with a tell-tale safety signal system to avoid driving off with the step down.

Some librarians want a rear window for ventilation or for cheerfulness. It has no value as far as driving because it is too high for immediate vision behind the unit. This window is available in both stationary and ventilating type; however, if it is the ventilating type it should be one that does not leak dust.

Skylights constructed so that they will not leak in a rain storm can provide considerable light. In the United Kingdom this is known as a clerestory roof. As a matter of fact there are many days during which artificial lights are unnecessary with sufficient skylights. They also have an advantage in that they can be of the ventilating type. One twenty-four inch square skylight to every six foot of body length is sufficient.

Exterior compartments for tools and equipment may be built on either side of the unit under the floor. In emergencies an extra supply of books may be carried in these exterior compartments.

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Insulation is necessary in all climates since insulation holds the heat out of the bookmobile when cooling is desired, and retains it when warmth is needed. The insulation should be of a block type so that it will not settle from the vehicle's vibrations. A sheet of aluminum foil between the outer panel and the insulation is necessary in air-conditioned bookmobiles as a moisture barrier. With the inside temperature lower than the outside temperature there will be a point of condensation from the exterior humidity which would cause moisture to form in the walls of units without a moisture barrier. This in time would deteriorate steel or wood in the structural members of the body. It is also advisable to use two layers of glass or thermo-pane in skylights of air-conditioned bookmobiles so that the minimum amount of heat penetrates into the body through the skylights.

The selection of electrical power for a bookmobile falls into three categories. First, a connection for 110 or 220 volts, whichever is required, from an exterior source. The second method is to supply the 110 or 220 volt current from a self-powered generator installed in the mobile unit. The third method is to produce twelve volt current from a battery installed in the bookmobile.

The exterior source of power requires an outlet at each stop. This is usually done by installing a pole or securing permission from the owner of property at a stop to place the outlet on his building. This is frequently done at shopping centers. To make the connection between the mobile unit and the outlet an adequate shoreline cable is necessary which can be carried in an exterior compartment under the floor of the bookmobile. A simple method of storing the cable is to wind it on brackets or a reel installed on the inside of the compartment door, which hinges down. The cable can be connected to the mobile unit inside this compartment so that it only becomes necessary to unwind the amount of cable needed for the outlet at each stop. One of the main objections to the use of outlets at each stop is the possible need for changing locations of the stops. This means that each outlet must be moved to a new location. However, for most libraries this occurs quite infrequently and the cost of moving a receptacle is small compared to the cost involved in the installation of a self-powered generator. The exterior outlet is also the least expensive to maintain. Some power companies require a meter be installed at each outlet. Other companies permit only one meter in the bookmobile and this method has been very satisfactory. Then there are those enlightened power companies with a sense of civic

duty, which in view of the small amount of current consumed charge a flat rate for each stop, or in a few cases make no charge at all.

The installation of a self-powered generator can be satisfactory but it must have sufficient capacity to take care of the requirements. The installation of the generator equipment must be carefully done to obtain the maximum service with the least amount of maintenance. The power plant must have adequate ventilation and be engineered in such a manner that the exhausted hot air will not be recirculated thru the cool air intake. This power plant should be mounted on special rubber blocks designed for this purpose so that the unit floats free. The gasoline line to the supply tank, which is normally the chassis gasoline supply tank, should be equipped with an auto-pulse as close to the half way distance as possible to eliminate the possibility of a vapor lock which frequently occurs in hot weather. The compartment which houses this power plant should be well insulated and muffled to prevent the heat and noise from entering the bookmobile body. It is also advisable to mount the generator on a sliding tray so that it can be easily removed for service.

The third method, which is the twelve volt current from the chassis battery, is quite popular in rural bookmobiles. There are important factors involved in this method. The first is to have a battery capacity of sufficient quantity and a charging system of sufficient size to replace the used current. Batteries are available in two hundred-ampere-hour capacity size, and where a quantity of electricity will be consumed it may be advisable to use two two-hundred-ampere-hour batteries connected in parallel. The chassis should be equipped with a heavy duty generator or alternator with at least a fifty-ampere-hour output on a low cut-in basis. The low cut-in basis means that the generator will produce its full capacity while the chassis engine is idling. In addition to the chassis generator it is also necessary to have a battery charger connected permanently to the battery in such a manner that the charger can be connected to an exterior source of one hundred ten volt electricity while the bookmobile is in storage. This charger should also be equipped with an eight hour timer to prevent the battery from being overcharged. It is advisable to have the batteries installed on a sliding tray for ease of servicing.

The twelve volt electrical system has become quite popular because of its independence and since the availability of twelve volt fluorescent lights. Artificial lights are available in various types: incandescent for 110 volt, incandescent for twelve volt, incandescent for a

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combination of 110 volt and twelve volt, fluorescent for 110 volt, fluorescent for a combination of 110 volt and twelve volt. The choice between incandescent and fluorescent is a matter of personal selection; however, fluorescent is used in the majority of cases. When 110 volt electricity is available it is customary to install two continuous rows of fluorescent lights in the ceiling approximately fifteen inches from the top of the shelving for proper lighting. A light above the stepwell at the patrons' door is advisable when the bookmobile is operating at night. Exterior flood lights are available to light up the exterior of the bookmobile for advertising and/or safety purposes at night. Where 110 volt current is not available a combination 110 volt and twelve volt fluorescent circular tube is generally used, operated from the chassis battery.

With the exception of a very few southern states heating a bookmobile is important. This can be done with hot water heaters operating from the chassis engine. However, this becomes very costly because it is necessary to operate the chassis engine when heat is desired. It is quite detrimental to present day gasoline or diesel engines to idle them for any period of time. In addition the consumption of fuel is considerable. There are gasoline heaters on the market that will operate more cheaply than operating the chassis engine. However, these heaters need fine adjustments by a mechanic who is familiar with this type of equipment, require frequent maintenance, and are excessively noisy. Another type of heater occasionally used is the oil burner. It is quiet and comparatively simple to operate though it necessitates filling the tank almost every day and the burner needs periodic cleaning. There is a question as to the approval of this type of heater by the Underwriter's Laboratory for use in a bookmobile.

A popular, convenient, and low cost means of heat for a rural bookmobile is liquid petroleum gas, better known as bottled gas. In recent years approval for this type from the Underwriter's Laboratory, American Gas Association, and the Interstate Commerce Commission has been secured, providing it is installed and operated according to their instructions. The gas may be handled either by replaceable portable tanks or by a stationary tank. The stationary tank method is looked upon as the safest since the connections are not disconnected and reconnected frequently. The stationary tanks are available in various sizes and it has been discovered that the one hundred seventy-five pound capacity tank is the most adequate since it will not be necessary to refill this tank more than once a week. The

availability of service for this type of heater is easily accessible since each supplier of gas must maintain licensed personnel for this purpose. The heater is quiet, and cleaning is limited to approximately once a year. Another advantage of this type of heating is that the fan or the blower in the heater, necessary for good distribution of heat, may be operated on a twelve volt system from the chassis battery.

For those bookmobiles operating in a metropolitan area electric heat is desirable. Although this requires a 220 volt outlet at each stop no fuel tanks must be filled and maintenance is practically nil. The distribution of electric heat is excellent with a 500 watt electric heater behind each desk and radiant panel heating in the floor. This is not sufficient heat for very cold days, but it does provide heat for those chilly days when the heaters behind the desks are not quite sufficient. In addition to this it will keep the floor warm on a very cold day. For cold days well below freezing sufficient additional electric heat on thermostat control can be furnished by two 3000 or 4000 watt electric heaters. These are usually located with one toward the front and one toward the rear. Those bookmobiles that are equipped with air conditioning can have this additional heat installed in the air conditioning ducts thus eliminating the two large heaters.

For ventilation one natural means is to make all windows ventilating including those in the doors. Most bookmobiles have skylights and these should be made to ventilate so that rising heat will be exhausted. A roof exhaust fan may be incorporated. However, if a twelve volt system is to be used in the bookmobile, the largest twelve volt fan will only move approximately 350 cubic feet a minute necessitating more than one fan dependent on the size of the bookmobile. If 110 volt electricity is available, then ceiling exhaust fans are available which will move over 1500 cubic feet per minute. Another method of adding circulation to the air is to incorporate several circulating fans of which many types are available. Here again, it must be remembered that twelve volt fans are not as powerful as 110 volt fans. The front fan should be mounted so that it can also be used as a windshield defroster fan in the winter time.

The demand for air conditioning becomes greater every year and there are a number of mobile air-conditioning units now on the market. However, these units are engineered to reach their efficiency when the mobile unit is in motion. Because of this it is easy to understand why this type of air conditioning is not desirable in a bookmobile since top efficiency is most needed when the unit is stopped at its stations.

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The type of air conditioning used to cool most bookmobiles requires 220 volt electric power from an exterior source or from a self-propelled power plant as previously described. Since 220 volt electric current is available in all metropolitan areas it becomes relatively simple to produce satisfactory air conditioning in a metropolitan mobile unit. On the other hand, 220 volt current is not available at a majority of rural bookmobile stations. This means that air conditioning in rural bookmobiles would require the source of power on the mobile unit itself. This method is costly and requires considerable maintenance.

When selecting the air conditioning unit it is most important that the unit be manufactured and engineered for mobile installation. These air conditioners contain special features to overcome the vibrations encountered in mobile equipment. It is extremely important that the air conditioner has sufficient capacity as governed by such things as the square feet of glass area, type of insulation, moisture barrier, heat output from the lights and other accessories, maximum number of people who will be on the bookmobile at one time, and the range of temperature and humidity in the area where the bookmobile will operate.

There is a formula for determining the capacity of air conditioning on the basis of the BTU's produced from the above mentioned items. If the formula calls for a certain size unit and it is at all marginal, it is advisable to select the next largest size. If an air conditioning unit must operate at full capacity nearly 100 per cent of the time failures become frequent. For example, the formula may produce an answer that falls in the range of a two ton unit. However, the number of BTU's are of a quantity that comes close to the three ton range. In this case by all means select a three ton unit. The extra expenditure at this time will far offset the maintenance that will be necessary from the smaller unit.

In the selection of the chassis, which consists of the motorized mechanism for the bookmobile, there are three basic considerations: the size of the bookmobile, the type or style, and the capacity required. The size is of first consideration because it will determine the style. If the body is twenty feet or less it can be mounted on the following styles: the conventional, with the entire engine extending forward of the windshield; the cab forward or "snubnose," with a small portion of the engine extending forward of the windshield; and the forward control, frequently termed the parcel delivery, with the entire engine back of the windshield. If the body size exceeds twenty

feet it is advisable to select the transit forward control type chassis which may have the engine either in front or in the rear. Its outstanding feature is the excellent distribution of weight for a long body. The front axle is located farther to the rear shifting more of the weight from the rear axle to the front axle and creating a shorter wheelbase. The front axle is considerably wider than on other chassis and, along with the shorter wheelbase, offers the much shorter turning radius so desirable in the maneuverability of a large bookmobile.

The capacity of the chassis should be selected strictly by the gross vehicle weight (G.V.W.) rating of the chassis manufacturer. The G.V.W. means the Gross Vehicle Weight of the entire unit including the complete chassis, body, shelving, books, personnel, etc. The sales engineer who is assisting you in the design of your bookmobile will determine the G.V.W. rating that is required. Note that the former rating of one, two, three ton, and so on is no longer used. Terrain is an important factor in selecting the chassis. In some localities it is advisable to have the chassis equipped with a two speed rear axle and by all means an engine with sufficient power to handle the unit. Some roads are rough with chuck holes and rocks. In this case the bookmobile chassis should be equipped with extra heavy tires to prevent blow-outs. If the terrain and roads are frequently soft, or the operating territory is frequently covered with heavy snow, it is advisable to have the bookmobile chassis equipped with mud and snow type tires.

The decoration of the bookmobile can add much to its success. This includes the selection of exterior colors, lettering, floor covering, interior colors, desk tops, and seat coverings. A good quality of floor covering is essential. Light duty domestic type linoleum should be avoided; heavy duty, one-eighth inch thick linoleum is satisfactory. There are a number of vinyl floor coverings that are attractive and durable. Asphalt tile is too brittle and cork is too soft. The floor covering is subjected to considerable abuse by heavy traffic bringing in mud, sand, moisture, cinders, and gravel. The base of the shelving at the floor line should be protected with a rubber cove base moulding. It is advisable to have a white or preferably off-white ceiling and a light colored floor to reflect light from the windows and skylights onto the books.

The major equipment items now have been covered. Other available accessories which may be added include: correct exterior ICC lights, directional signals to meet ICC requirements, interior electrical re-

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ceptacles for appliances, back-up warning alarm system, public address system, clock, fire extinguisher flag and flares, rear view mirrors, sun visors, windshield wipers, windshield washers, lavatory, sunshades for skylights and windshield, pencil sharpener, a facial tissue holder, a vanity mirror, wash and dry towels in a dispenser, the latter three items all placed on the inside of the clothes locker door.

To this point consideration has been given to an ideal bookmobile without consideration of cost. The ideal situation is when the librarian consults with the bookmobile manufacturer before a budget request is made. If the budget has been established then it is still necessary for the librarian to consult with the bookmobile manufacturer to design the most functional bookmobile with the available funds. In either case it is to the advantage of the reputable bookmobile manufacturer to design a unit that will be most satisfactory to the library and the community.

The range in cost is usually determined by the length of the bookmobile and the style chassis on which it is built, the lowest being ten to sixteen foot bodies mounted on a conventional type chassis. The same range in length can be mounted on the forward control type chassis at some additional cost and, on the cab forward or snub-nose style at still higher cost. The next range is seventeen feet through twenty feet which can be satisfactorily built on the forward control and cab forward style. This length is not desirable on a conventional type chassis because of the increased over-all length. The next range is twenty-two feet through twenty-nine feet which should be built only on the transit forward control style chassis. The following costs are based upon 1960 prices and cover a complete bookmobile including the chassis.

It must be realized that accessories and refinements affect the price of all bookmobiles. The ten to sixteen foot range generally falls between \$7,000.00 and \$11,000.00. The seventeen through twenty foot range will generally fall between \$12,000.00 and \$14,000.00. The twenty-two through twenty-nine foot range will fall between \$15,000.00 and \$23,000.00. These prices do not include air conditioning. Frequently, it is discovered that a librarian will work toward a certain budget which sometimes takes several years. In the meantime costs have advanced and the librarian experiences a disappointment when it is discovered that the planned bookmobile is not available within the budget that has been so hard to secure.

The operating expenditures of a bookmobile generally consist of

gasoline, oil, battery service, tire service, and maintenance. Maintenance is extremely important and covers such items as lubrication, washing, heater service, electric power plant service, air-conditioning service, and damages. All equipment and machinery require attention. Preventive maintenance is the least costly. Preventive maintenance starts with the purchase of the new unit. Make certain that the size and capacity of all equipment is adequate. Frequently an additional expenditure at the time of purchase will save this amount many times over in maintenance. One of the most important items in maintenance is cleanliness. This applies to the paint, engine, batteries, tires, generators, heaters, air conditioning, floor covering and shelving. The normal operating cost of a bookmobile, again based on 1960 prices, should be somewhere between \$800 and \$1500 a year depending on the size of the bookmobile and the territory it covers. This should cover gasoline, oil, insurance, normal preventive maintenance, cleaning, and storage.

In practically every situation where operation cost has become excessive, it is due to the lack of preventive maintenance. For example, when the paint is chipped it should be touched up to prevent rusting, when a light lens is broken it should be replaced. When the chassis engine, electric power plant, generator, heaters or other equipment require periodic service it should be done at the particular time prescribed by the respective manufacturer. The proper housing of a bookmobile will help to cut down on the maintenance cost. This will assist in keeping it clean as well as protect it from damage by vandals and prowlers. In the colder climates it is quite advantageous if the unit can be stored in a heated garage. If the books are permitted to become cold they will react as refrigeration in the bookmobile body. When the heat is turned on in the morning the majority of it will go to warm the cold books, and some period of time will lapse before the heat is felt by the personnel. Because of this it is advisable to maintain some heat inside the unit on cold nights when it is not stored in a heated garage. The ideal situation is when a library maintains its own garage in connection with the library. Other facilities are sometimes available in the city garage, the county garage, fire department, or commercial garages. However a city, county, or commercial garage should be investigated for its capacity for if too crowded it may result in considerable damage to the bookmobile.

When maintenance or repair work is necessary on the air-conditioning equipment it is advisable to consult the bookmobile manu-

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facturer first. The reason for this is that they are familiar with mobile air conditioning. Frequently, a library will go to a local air-conditioning firm which is very efficient when it comes to maintaining commercial or home air-conditioning but has little or no knowledge of mobile units. This has caused considerable additional trouble and cost to the library.

At the time the new bookmobile is ready for delivery from the bookmobile manufacturer it is advisable for the library to send a driver to the factory to pick it up. The driver should remain at the plant until full instructions have been received on the operation of all the equipment and a complete inspection of the bookmobile is made.

The replacement of a bookmobile may become advisable because of its size, obsolescence, or deterioration. The necessity to replace a bookmobile because of size may have come from poor original planning or unforeseen growth. Some bookmobiles have been selected without consideration of the growth of the city. Other bookmobiles have been selected with future planning but, due to growth far beyond the imagination of anyone concerned, it has been necessary to replace the bookmobile with a larger unit. The latter reason has occurred in a number of instances. As a matter of fact, at the present time there are a number of excellent bookmobiles for sale because they are too small to give adequate service to the unexpected growth of a community. Obsolescence comes about through the development of new desirable equipment. These items are mainly connected with style, heat, light, ventilating, air conditioning, or chassis design. Deterioration comes from the unit actually wearing out. Of course this can occur at an earlier date due to inadequate maintenance and it is rather difficult to predict such a time. The more expensive units, where considerable planning has been done in the first place, will as a rule last much longer. It is advisable for any library to start immediately after the purchase of their new bookmobile to plan for replacement. Some method should be adopted for an amortization program so that funds will be available when it is necessary to replace the unit from deterioration. The safe period for planning is approximately ten years, except for the transit forward control, which can be fifteen years with good preventive maintenance.

As a final word choose a bookmobile manufacturer with experience if at all possible. The contents of this article catalog the bookmobile as a very special type of mobile unit. It is common practice for a fire

PAUL H. WYER

department to call on a builder of fire trucks for their mobile equipment, the same is true of a city purchasing city buses or a utility company purchasing line trucks. A manufacturer without experience can create many disappointments for both himself and the library.

Budgeting the Operation Cost of Bookmobiles

MINNIE J. LITTLE

THE COST OF OPERATING BOOKMOBILES has been the subject of a five year study carried on by an American Library Association committee which began its work under the Extension Section of the Public Libraries Division in 1955. The project was continued under the Financial Administration Section of the Library Administration Division. The five year study has now been completed with the compilation of bookmobile operating costs of 1959 and the distribution of the compilation to respondents and others interested. The results of the study are given in tabular form at the end of this chapter.

Members of the committee were: Margrette C. Floreth, librarian, Barry-Lawrence Cooperative Libraries; William S. Geller, assistant librarian, Los Angeles County Public Library; Elizabeth H. Hughey, librarian, North Carolina State Library; Lena B. Nofcier, librarian, Lima, Ohio, Public Library; and Minnie J. Little, chairman.

The committee appointed by the chairman of the Extension Section, Dorothy Strouse, following the Midwinter meeting of 1955 sent out a brief questionnaire to a number of librarians and people in private motor businesses to determine how operating cost records were being kept. It was discovered that there was little uniformity in the way individual libraries kept their records and it seemed important to set up an accounting sheet for the uniform reporting of operating costs of bookmobiles.

The first cost sheet was worked out with the help of two professors of business administration, one a professor of accounting at the University of Washington and the other at the University of California, Los Angeles. Advice was asked of Miss Strouse, Gretchen Schenk, and the public library at Racine, Wisconsin, which had recently published an article on library accounting. Cost records were discussed with the bookkeepers and with the directors of publicly sup-

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ported organizations operating mobile units, with the operator of the mobile post office units on the Pacific Coast and with truck sales units who supply their customers with advice on keeping cost records. The cost consultant engineer in the General Motors Corporation office in Seattle was particularly helpful. Local public officials having responsibility for financial records were also asked for advice.

Three members of the committee met during the 1955 A.L.A. Conference in Philadelphia. They pooled their findings and information and worked out a cost sheet for presentation to the Extension Section Board. The board thought the cost sheet too involved and they directed that it be simplified to include only annual costs. Each library would keep daily and monthly records as it wished but use the uniform sheet for reporting annual costs. The board also directed that the committee concern itself only with operation costs and not service costs. Accounting principles were to be the same as those used in private motor business. The cost sheet was simplified with the help of Ralph Shaw and it was approved by Robert Leigh.

Cost sheets, together with a note of explanation, both reproduced below, were sent to all librarians who had volunteered for the project at the Philadelphia meeting. State librarians and state extension librarians were asked to suggest libraries willing to participate in the project to get as wide a coverage as possible. Each participating library was to continue to report operating costs on its bookmobile for a five year period. The first year cost figures were returned on 124 bookmobiles from ninety libraries in twenty-five states. The second year a number of other libraries sent in their bookmobile operation cost figures, but a few dropped out. During the five year period no offer of cost figures was refused. Each year a cumulative list of libraries and bookmobiles, together with their variable costs and operating cost per mile, was mimeographed and distributed to respondents and others requesting it.

Several of the respondents expressed appreciation for the cost survey, such as the letter from Anne E. Andrews, extension librarian, May Memorial Library, Burlington, North Carolina: "I hope that it has proven as beneficial to other libraries as it has to us. After receiving the first inquiry and noting it included depreciation values of bookmobiles, our Board approved this in our yearly budget. Therefore, this year, we will be able to purchase a new bookmobile from accumulated funds. I believe this part of the inquiry has helped us most."

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In 1959, the final year of the study, cost figures included one to five-year reports on 243 bookmobiles of 156 libraries in twenty-nine states. Of these, seventy-one were new bookmobiles added after the start of the project. The project required operation cost figures on the same bookmobile in service for the entire period. This ruled out the new bookmobiles. Operation cost figures were complete for the five years on fifty-three bookmobiles, thirty-three operating as single units, fourteen operating as two units for seven libraries and six operating as three units for two libraries.

The inquiry did not request the cost per gallon of gasoline which varies greatly, and did not include weather, road conditions, and other factors determining costs. For this reason the value of the comparison of the operating cost of one truck with another is questionable, but the analysis of the operating cost figures on the same truck for five years yields interesting information.

Examining the cost per mile figures of the thirty-three single units, there were ten bookmobiles whose cost per mile was less the fifth year than the first year. Eight of the ten fluctuated from year to year, but three had a steady decline each year except one during the five-year period. These ten bookmobiles must have had favorable operating conditions and few unanticipated difficulties.

The cost per mile of the other twenty-three single units all show an increase the fifth year over the first regardless of the variation in other years. The years of the sharpest rise in the cost per mile are the years of the highest repair and maintenance cost. It is interesting to note that this sharp rise is usually followed by a sharp decline the next year. Could this indicate that when repairs were made that they were thorough and complete and possibly took care of anticipated deterioration? It is to be noted that heavy repair costs can be related to the age of the bookmobile. A few bookmobiles have a rise in repair and maintenance the second or third year. Occasionally one may go ten years without heavy repair costs, but by far the greatest number of bookmobiles require expensive repairs during the fifth to the ninth year.

Of the libraries operating two bookmobiles each, two did not follow the accounting system. One used a budget estimate and one used the total operating cost of the two bookmobiles and divided it in half. The other five libraries followed the accounting system. These ten bookmobiles each varied in operating cost per mile. One bookmobile's cost per mile increased each year and the other bookmobile of the

same library showed a decrease. In no one year did the two bookmobiles in the service of the same library have the same cost per mile. This would show that the operating cost of a bookmobile is an individual matter depending upon its condition and character.

Analysis of the operation costs of the three bookmobiles of Lucas County Library, Ohio, shows a gradual increase in cost per mile with decreasing mileage and increase in repairs and maintenance. In no year was the cost per mile of each of the three bookmobiles the same. The operation costs of Yakima Valley Regional Library's three bookmobiles also varied, the fluctuation responding to mileage and repair and maintenance. Two of the three bookmobiles ended the last year with the same cost per mile.

This five year study has provided much statistical material which is usable in planning bookmobile budgets. Budgeting for a bookmobile operation for the first year requires careful planning and sifting of information. One can start with computing the fixed costs: depreciation, interest if any, license, and insurance. These costs are readily obtained and usually remain much the same for the eight year depreciation period. The variable costs may take more inquiry. The local price of gasoline and oil together with the known mileage will establish the cost of motor fuel. Tire expenses and repair and maintenance are usually not heavy costs the first two years and may be estimated closely enough. Toll expense, heating, damage repairs not reimbursed, rent or storage for the bookmobile, and room and meals, must also be estimated. One can check one's figures by making inquiry of operators of both public and private mobile service units in the bookmobile area for their operating cost per mile. Care, however, should be taken to make comparisons only with vehicles of the same weight load and horsepower. By taking into account the total mileage one can approximate the total expected variable costs.

Explanation of Cost Items

Fixed and Variable Costs—Cost of operation of trucks is expressed two ways, time basis and mileage basis. Those costs which exist regardless of use are figured on a time basis and are called fixed costs. Those costs which depend upon the operation or use are figured on a mileage basis and are called variable costs.

FIXED COSTS

Depreciation or Replacement—This is a necessary item in all private business accounting. Public service units are often not aware of depreciation costs but

Budgeting the Operation Cost of Bookmobiles

Bookmobile Cost of Operation Year

Library _____ Address _____ Fixed Costs—(yearly basis) Depreciation _____ Interest _____ License _____ Insurance _____ Fire and Theft _____ Comprehensive _____ Collision _____ Liability _____ Labor _____ Librarians _____ Driver Clerk _____ Clerks _____ On Bookmobile _____ In Office _____ Registration _____ Industrial Insurance _____ Retirement _____ Social Security _____ Variable Costs—(mileage basis) Gasoline and Oil _____ Repairs and Maintenance _____ Tires and Tire Expense _____ Damage Repairs Not Reimbursed _____ Tolls _____ Other _____ Total Annual Cost _____	Bookmobile (Identification) _____ Year _____ Chassis Identification _____ Body Year _____ Chassis Year _____ Capacity—Running Feet of Shelving _____ Cost _____ Builder _____ Address _____ Fixed Costs—Not Labor _____ Fixed Costs—Labor _____ Total Fixed Costs _____ Total Variable Costs _____ Total Mileage _____ Variable Cost Per Mile _____ <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">[341]</div>
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depreciation (or replacement) requires consideration. In the case of bookmobiles the mileage is far less than average and an eight year depreciating period would be proper. We advise a depreciating period of eight years or 1 per cent per month. Twelve per cent of cost would be tabulated each year for eight years, as depreciation or replacement.

Interest—Private business accounting figures interest on the total investment in the truck and it should be 3 per cent a year until the truck is fully depreciated. (On account of depreciation this 3 per cent amounts to the same as 6 per cent a year on depreciated value.) Shaw advises that interest be tabulated as a fixed cost *only* if the library is actually paying out interest for some purchase.

License—Enter cost.

Insurance—Enter cost of bookmobile insurance paid. (Each library should be sure that it has the desired insurance coverage. "Comprehensive" liability may have a medical payment endorsement which covers accidents to bookmobile patrons for which there is no legal liability.)

Labor—Librarians, driver clerk, clerks on bookmobile, clerks in office, registration. Labor is both a service and an operation cost. Shown as a sub-total under fixed costs, labor cost can be considered as an entity and an arbitrary assignment made to each cost if a service cost survey should be undertaken in the future.

Industrial Insurance—This is figured on days employees are on the bookmobile.

Retirement Cost—Employer's retirement contribution.

Social Security—Employer's contribution where employees are covered by O.A.S.I.

VARIABLE COSTS

Gasoline and Oil—Tabulate as one item. For annual cost accounting no breakdown is necessary. The record sheets, daily, weekly, or monthly will carry detail necessary for checking operation problems.

Repairs and Maintenance—This tabulation includes accessories, equipment, lubrication, storage or garage, washing, (or cost of materials if washing is done by staff). Painting if not done at regular intervals. All repairs both materials and labor.

Tires—Tabulate tire costs as they occur.

Damage Repairs Not Reimbursed by Insurance—Business accounting considers this necessary both for private and public service units.

Tolls—Tabulate all bridge and ferry tolls paid.

Other—This space allows for any variable costs incurred and omitted in this sheet such as meals and public garage overhead figured on mileage.

Budgeting the Operation Cost of Bookmobiles

Fixed and Variable Costs of Single Bookmobile Units Showing Increase in Cost Per Mile

Library	Re- port Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Pine Bluff & Jefferson County Public Library	1955	1950	\$ 708.65	\$ 77.30	\$ 297.11	6,330	0.5
Pine Bluff, Arkansas	1956		709.65	—	408.71	6,500	.0629
	1957		710.76	—	667.64	7,000	.095
	1958		710.76	—	666.00	7,200	.0925
	1959		83.31	—	402.78	7,200	.06
Long Beach Public Library (Incl. "garage overhead")	1955		2221.00	—	1571.64	3,072	.395
*Incl. Overhead \$386.93 (Bookmobile rented for \$350 a month. Annual rental \$4200)	1956		1704.00	960.13	1741.89	3,792	.459
	1957	1954	1704.00	2776.47	3509.60	4,215	.83
	1958		1704.00	2154.82	2871.29	4,332	.662
	1959		1704.00	1532.57	*2207.85	2,800	.79
San Mateo County Library Redwood City, Calif.	1955	1952	1010.75	281.60	869.67	11,575	.075
(Library pays County Main- tenance Div. 8c per mi. ea. month. Covers gas, oil, depreciation, maintenance not generator.)	1956		1010.75	382.55	1074.09	10,566	.1016
	1957		1010.75	941.57	1408.97	9,269	.152
	1958		1010.75	658.18	1028.83	10,363	.099
	1959		1010.75	523.69	679.01	11,383	.086
Stanislaus County Free Library Modesto, California	1955	1950	1119.90	(est.) 200.00	717.00	11,209	.063
	1956		1119.84	470.06	1021.25	12,373	.0825
	1957		1119.84	759.66	1443.42	12,091	.119
	1958		1119.00	210.00	753.00	12,000	.063
	1959		1119.84	534.93	1061.41	13,150	.079
Tahama County Free Library Red Bluff, California	1955	1953	780.00	187.97	385.36	6,849	.056
	1956		730.00	76.30	338.66	7,095	.047
	1957		730.00	175.75	441.60	7,090	.062
	1958		720.00	225.80	632.54	7,052	.089
	1959		720.00	229.28	682.70	7,838.7	.087
Larimer County Library Fort Collins, Colorado	1955	1952	758.02	219.07	527.32	7,956	.07
	1956		730.04	232.08	553.36	7,155	.0773
	1957		861.03	—	902.14	6,752	.1337
	1958		741.30	596.96	914.37	7,074	.13
	1959		610.56	747.72	1139.77	7,471	.15
La Porte County Library La Porte, Indiana	1955	1954	623.40	200.00	620.00	8,031	.077
	1956		812.40	84.81	487.59	8,779	.0555
	1957		932.40	446.19	863.56	8,637	.10
	1958		827.26	340.44	887.35	8,783	.101
*Inc. Rent \$220	1959		827.66	843.30	*1471.19	9,545	.154
Rapides Parish Library Alexandria, Pa.	1955	1952	925.22	174.62	728.56	12,233	.06
	1956		939.23	65.66	322.17	12,122	.0266
	1957		943.00	341.00	620.00	12,061	.051
	1958		948.00	381.00	1359.00	12,223	.111
	1959		948.00	713.00	1094.00	15,691	.07

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Fixed and Variable Costs of Single Bookmobile Units
Showing Increase in Cost Per Mile (Continued)

Library	Report Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Framingham Town Library	1955	1954	1090.92	411.00	751.00	4,800	.155
Framingham, Mass.	1956		1354.00	441.25	999.57	5,000	.1999
*Items include propane gas \$131	1957		1683.32	510.43	*1111.60	5,000	.22
#Propane gas \$123, garage, etc. \$492	1958		1379.00	976.70	#1877.46	5,000	.375
*Inc. Fr. Gas \$129.35 Garage \$192, Rent \$300	1959		1365.68	1171.28	*2013.21	2,479	.678
Greene County Library	1955	1951	1180.60	460.00	1022.00	12,000+	.085
Springfield, Mo.	1956		1188.00	980.00	1320.00	8,000+	.165
	1957		1202.35	347.44	806.44	8,000+	.1008
	1958		1202.35	634.56	997.84	8,500	.117
	1959		1202.35	678.71	1265.38	8,000	.158
May Memorial Library	1955	1951	838.77	33.38	403.17	7,007	.0566
Burlington, N. C.	1956		828.77	46.30	404.95	7,072	.0572
	1957		815.70	68.22	457.81	6,872	.0666
*Damage repairs not reimbursed (\$22.70)	1958		811.19	179.63	514.83	6,068	.0848
	1959		739.20	42.98	*502.69	5,761	.0872
Sheppard Memorial Library	1955	1955	790.90	26.12	228.70	8,357	.025
Greenville, N. C.	1956		827.17	81.56	449.20	12,625	.036
	1957		816.96	182.25	640.95	12,297	.052
	1958		807.55	118.85	456.20	12,393	.037
	1959		801.64	229.51	695.08	12,460	.0557
Lawson McGhee Library	1955	1950	1035.00	459.41	733.32	3,600	.20
Knoxville, Tennessee	1956		1035.00	831.87	1918.09	4,160	.3168
	1957		1034.10	480.12	705.48	4,472	.157
	1958		1013.70	1111.61	1365.37	4,160	.32
	1959		1041.60	801.77	1094.27	4,000	.27
(est.)							
Tennessee Regional Bookmobiles:							
Blue Grass	1955	1954	—	55.44	164.25	6,917	.0212
	1956		—	60.20	276.87	12,282	.0225
	1957		—	484.54	733.85	15,374	.0477
	1958		—	96.00	382.00	13,944	.027
	1959		—	162.00	385.00	9,039	.043
Clinch-Powell	1955	1953	—	24.10	294.32	9,828	.03
	1956		—	123.24	438.97	10,504	.0418
	1957		—	501.66	923.33	12,513	.0737
	1958		—	360.00	673.00	9,891	.068
	1959		—	160.00	472.00	8,729	.054
Fort Loudoun	1955	1953	—	204.86	514.79	10,387	.0496
	1956		—	514.50	797.37	8,631	.0920
	1957		—	195.15	738.72	13,035	.0566
	1958		—	305.00	624.00	13,305	.047
	1959		—	437.00	785.00	13,003	.060

Budgeting the Operation Cost of Bookmobiles
Fixed and Variable Costs of Single Bookmobile Units
Showing Increase in Cost Per Mile (Continued)

Library	Report Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Middle Tennessee State College	1955	1951	—	298.82	586.49	12,579	.043
	1956	—	—	167.03	293.46	6,218	.0470
	1957	—	—	74.31	865.73	3,747	.151
	1958	—	—	282.07	377.00	6,173	.061
	1959	—	—	1043.00	1120.00	2,477	.450
Nolichucky	1955	1953	—	42.85	255.72	7,545	.033
	1956	—	—	75.72	230.83	8,460	.0390
	1957	—	—	442.82	740.01	8,804	.0847
	1958	—	—	226.00	505.00	8,056	.063
	1959	—	—	123.00	405.00	9,186	.044
Upper Cumberland	1955	1954	—	49.34	196.37	5,565	.035
	1956	—	—	67.36	330.23	11,054	.0320
	1957	—	—	177.67	95.61	10,608	.0467
	1958	—	—	435.00	786.00	9,764	.079
	1959	—	—	480.00	811.00	10,644	.076
Warioto	1955	1953	—	126.14	425.49	10,851	.039
	1956	—	—	237.34	642.77	11,798	.0544
	1957	—	—	470.59	811.58	11,612	.0698
	1958	—	—	778.00	1167.00	11,566	.101
	1959	—	—	1466.63	1822.56	12,473	.15
Watauga	1955	1951	—	390.82	596.35	8,780	.068
	1956	—	—	292.36	585.82	8,115	.0720
	1957	—	—	303.90	644.20	9,877	.0652
	1958	—	—	105.00	317.00	8,120	.039
	1959	—	—	114.00	237.00	3,581	.070
Fairfax County Public Library Fairfax, Virginia	1955	1948	576.97	30.00	299.34	4,926.3	.06
	1956	—	735.50	107.05	474.52	5,963	.0795
	1957	—	257.60	187.72	484.70	5,142	.096
	1958	—	237.69	88.04	438.02	4,163	.105
	1959	—	237.00	295.00	428.00	4,655.4	.0618
Seattle Public Library Seattle, Washington	1955	1953	1128.36	278.08	602.67	4,964	.121
	1956	—	1111.60	489.66	859.72	5,484	.156
	1957	—	1111.60	290.00	794.78	5,601	.1429
	1958	—	1111.60	836.76	1124.66*	5,399	.208
*Inc. Propane gas \$66.62	1959	—	1110.00	489.28	737.60	5,309	.138

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*Fixed and Variable Costs of Single Bookmobile Units
Showing Decrease in Cost Per Mile*

Library	Re- port Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Stockton & San Joaquin County Library Stockton, California	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1952	1047.00 1047.00 942.60 941.20 1192.91	89.57 119.99 160.53 105.20 82.65	228.08 226.79 272.29 227.18 209.37	2,054 2,159 3,401 3,484 3,511	.10 .105 .078 .065 .057
Berkshire Athenaeum Pittsfield, Mass.	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1955	637.65 683.03 865.84 876.90 722.06	216.17 21.20 231.09 98.42 89.45	414.20 361.28 398.06 312.78 268.35	4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 3,750	.092 .11 .088 .07 .075
Hennepin County Library Minneapolis, Minnesota	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1951	1042.06 1035.31 1035.96 1008.52 1046.70	512.58 180.66 845.93 195.01 301.72	1380.05 901.04 1342.38 587.69 749.66	8,685 7,969 7,912 8,154 8,578	.15 .11 .1697 .154 .057
First Regional Library Hernando, Miss.	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1955	1556.01 1563.81 1583.70 1548.15 1554.15	593.57 380.94 398.95 137.95 305.85	2009.66 1596.16 1241.50 895.29 1165.28	20,922 16,629 15,631 17,103 17,329	.10 .0839 .079 .052 .067
Northeast Regional Library Corinth, Miss.	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1952	1107.30 1099.90 1107.90 1110.38 1110.28	104.39 210.27 224.35 854.30 178.47	912.74 982.26 958.14 *2165.45 802.69	16,582 15,005 15,896 13,025 16,800	.055 .0654 .06 .166 .047
*Inc. Auxiliary generator \$580.17	1959						
Youngstown & Mahoning County Library Youngstown, Ohio	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1947- 1952	1868.00 1888.00 537.00 507.00 500.00	762.00 692.00 *1696.00 428.00 124.46	1602.00 1563.00 2300.00 *1442.00 *581.76	9,532 8,418 6,261 6,504 6,712	.188 .185 .351 .222 .087
*Painting and remodeling interior							
*Incl. heating \$55, New desk \$280							
*Heating \$38.59							
Danville Public Library Danville, Virginia	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1949	887.63 887.63 49.54 49.54 49.54	107.92 86.13 150.92 220.37 68.96	254.02 243.62 496.92 408.93 289.41	2,183.5 2,266.2 2,188.7 2,567 3,445	.116 .107 .227 .16 .08
Fort Vancouver Regional Library Vancouver, Washington	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1952	1564.95 1564.47 1562.95 1562.57 1564.54	1151.19 453.48 811.09 743.91 847.28	2311.47 1287.24 1320.04 *1488.05 1543.65	10,938 15,950 10,497 9,977 8,888	.21 .081 .1257 .1492 .1737
*Incl. damage repairs not reimbursed \$10.75							
Pacific County Library Raymond, Washington	1955 1956 1957 1958 1959	1950	1035.64 1035.79 1035.74 1052.20 147.20	845.59 396.02 289.57 374.99 351.11	1297.84 842.88 *879.93 **1083.15 **1218.63	10,131 10,159 10,272 10,764 10,756	.128 .0829 .0856 .106 .113
*Incl. item \$175.11 meals and lodging							
**Meals and lodging							

Budgeting the Operation Cost of Bookmobiles
Fixed and Variable Costs of Single Bookmobile Units
Showing Decrease in Cost Per Mile (Continued)

Library	Report Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Pierce County Library	1955	1947	1113.77	348.50	913.20	8,626	.106
Tacoma, Washington	1956		191.98	477.31	1165.36	9,016	.129
	1957		192.98	386.85	*1337.15	8,593	.155
	1958		190.88	322.00	*1183.30	8,867	.134
*Incl. floor covering, tolls	1959		199.60	275.00	864.88	8,244	.105

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Fixed and Variable Costs. Two Bookmobile Units of Seven Libraries

Library	Report Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
Kern County Free Library (Traveling Branch) Bakersfield (School)	1955	1948	450.75	562.40	918.26	7,272	.1265
	1956		450.75	475.04	619.53	7,318	.084
	1957		0.	372.58	794.71	7,676	.1035
	1958		0.	69.37	442.03	8,205	.0538
	1959		0.	147.51	*532.41	8,205	.0644
(Incl. are County Garage overhead. Employees' meals reimbursed) *Undistributed expenses, travel, meals \$226.43 **Undistributed expenses, travel, room, meals, \$591.58	1955	1952	655.84	168.81	888.50	9,014	.0975
	1956		655.84	482.25	1275.17	9,476	.134
	1957		655.84	108.85	981.89	10,035	.098
	1958		655.84	38.14	882.13	10,975	.080
	1959		0.	485.11	**1482.58	9,104	.162
San Diego Public Library San Diego, Calif.	1955	1948	—	—	*1296.00	4,320	.30
	1956		With	—	*1296.00	4,320	.30
	1957		Variable	—	*1832.04	4,362	.42
	1958		Costs	—	*1674.00	4,784	.35
	1959		—	—	*1015.00	3,904	.26
	1955	1955	—	—	*1945.44	4,632	.42
	1956		With	—	*1945.00	4,632	.42
	1957		Variable	—	*2057.58	4,899	.42
	1958		Costs	—	*1558.00	4,451	.35
	1959		—	—	*1421.00	5,464	.26
*Used budget estimate	1955	1953	628.12	50.68	148.97	3,115	.047
	1956		628.12	101.09	303.27	6,970	.0435
	1957		608.08	155.65	383.80	6,970	.055
	1958		608.08	179.75	545.11	6,841	.079
	1959		608.08	236.20	469.00	6,841	.068
	1955	1955	424.12	33.16	106.96	2,037	.052
	1956		424.12	50.86	192.35	4,899	.0393
	1957		404.08	93.68	244.50	4,900	.0498
	1958		404.08	193.83	408.94	5,610	.072
	1959		404.08	56.90	232.09	7,050	.033
Enoch Pratt Free Library Baltimore, Maryland	*1955	1948-1950	1465.45	1044.54	3202.60	3,085.7	.5104
	*1956		City	2157.01	3434.77	6,527	.5262
	*1957		paye	2030.39	3729.33	4,966	.75
	*1958		fixed	640.28	4352.53	6,375	.561
	*1959		costs	872.02	1885.56	6,312	.25
*Costs reported for 2 bkm. No breakdowns #Includes 2 generators \$1800	1955	1949	1564.51	521.00	1265.00	8,852	.14
	1956		1565.51	1046.38	2055.58	8,559	.24
	1957		1565.51	600.84	1207.12	7,150	.168
	1958		265.51	494.08	1085.67	6,359	.17
	1959		265.51	654.08	1109.02	5,506	.20
	1955	1949	1539.51	843.00	1436.00	6,727	.21
	1956		1540.51	657.67	1267.22	6,991	.18
	1957		1540.51	1316.18	1836.60	6,378	.288
	1958		265.51	966.36	1420.84	5,919	.24
	1959		265.51	424.21	739.01	4,580	.16

Fixed and Variable Costs. Two Bookmobile Units of Seven Libraries
(Continued)

Library	Report Year	Year Bkm.	Total Fixed Costs Not Labor	Rep. and Maint.	Total Variable Costs	Total Mileage	Cost Per Mile
King County Public Library Seattle, Washington	1955	1947	280.14	728.03	1041.40	9,296	.112
	1956		209.60	733.73	1119.13	8,862	.126
	1957		199.43	*1554.15	2132.44	8,805	.242
	1958		250.28	364.81	881.14	8,518	.103
	1959		239.15	510.37	962.22	8,519	.113
	1955	1950	1265.54	807.57	1273.04	10,617	.119
	1956		1196.50	103.43	688.57	10,579	.065
	1957		1184.83	*1074.39	1578.63	10,198	.15479
	1958		1037.40	686.77	1205.17	11,070	.109
	1959		240.85	1224.25	1779.82	11,261	.158
Snohomish County Library Everett, Washington	1955	1946	1006.94	1274.63	2140.95	10,502	.1963
	1956		144.32	1102.38	1844.08	11,147	.165
	1957		144.32	941.42	*1808.14	11,568	.164
	1958		144.32	859.57	1511.28	9,243	.1635
	1959		246.18	1146.18	**1335.61	2,272	.588
	1955	1950	1051.81	632.14	1462.35	10,642	.137
	1956		1051.81	1171.62	1971.80	10,481	.188
	1957		1046.44	1155.17	*2160.23	9,952	.217
	1958		1046.44	1084.88	1932.13	19,448	.099
	1959		246.18	1621.23	**2669.40	10,169	.2625

Fixed and Variable Costs. Three Bookmobile Units of Two Libraries

Lucas County Library Maumee, Ohio	1955	1949	904.06	129.77	356.80	4,258	.08+
	1956		902.99	291.89	633.75	4,066	.1618
	1957		916.79	233.40	490.30	3,433	.143
	1958		146.53	145.82	384.98	3,568	.108
	1959		172.20	215.38	685.02	2,533	.194
	1955	1951	1093.70	217.53	875.79	8,868	.06+
	1956		1091.49	474.59	915.05	7,670	.1103
	1957		1105.69	187.16	452.15	4,331	.1099
	1958		1113.82	172.83	416.89	5,530	.0755
	1959		1137.11	652.99	1061.99	5,069	.21
Yakima Valley Regional Library Yakima, Washington	1955	1952	1128.22	51.64	358.90	5,015	.07
	1956		1126.01	95.51	302.07	5,138	.0588
	1957		1140.20	97.45	418.42	4,417	.0947
	1958		1148.35	176.14	505.71	4,643	.1089
	1959		1168.42	198.05	410.71	4,669	.088
	1955	1947	649.06	315.57	860.59	7,030	.1088
	1956		109.50	811.97	1291.59	9,138	.141
	1957		102.50	497.49	925.54	8,334	.111
	1958		85.10	318.29	532.05	7,650	.069
	1959		85.10	368.51	640.95	9,890	.06
Yakima Valley Regional Library Yakima, Washington	1955	1940	665.43	324.20	701.14	6,972	.1005
	1956		738.33	477.48	773.62	6,129	.126
	1957		732.33	167.52	663.80	5,754	.1153
	1958		80.10	1006.41	1447.67	4,110	.35
	1959		79.10	914.03	532.99	3,696	.14
	1955	1934	900.02	158.11	544.90	6,259	.0871
	1956		985.57	456.38	715.88	5,877	.122
	1957		957.57	95.05	473.10	6,393	.0753
	1958		939.17	838.92	1176.73	8,609	.136
	1959		939.17	115.65	429.47	7,436	.06

Bookmobile Publicity and Public Relations

SARAH L. WALLACE

"IT WAS COLOURED a pale, robin's egg-blue, and on the side, in big scarlet letters, was painted:

R. Mifflin's
Travelling Parnassus
Good Books for Sale
Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, R. L. S.
Hazlitt, and All Others"

That is Christopher Morley's description of a bookmobile of sorts, the Parnassus-on-wheels, which led Helen McGill off on her adventures.¹

Although most respectable librarians would shudder at the inconsistency of R. Mifflin's author entries, many have followed his example and made their bookmobiles colorful, moving advertisements of books and library service. If that were the answer, this article could end here, the editors of *Library Trends* could find good use for the extra pages, and librarians could send their robin's egg blue or canary yellow or cardinal red bookmobiles bouncing over the roads, their publicity problem solved.

In talking to librarians, bookmobile or otherwise, it becomes apparent that the distinction between publicity and public relations is a foggy one. One will report that printed flyers will solve his public relations problems. Another prefers television programs. A third leans toward radio spot announcements. Librarians who consider good posters the prime elements of a public relations program are not quite as common as they used to be, but they still exist. This confusion is not characteristic of the library profession alone. Indeed, so closely are the two related—public relations and publicity—it is often difficult for the professional to place the proper tag on each.

Erasmus and Sam Johnson agreed that definitions are hazardous.

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He who has studied logic, however, has learned that the best way to progress in any discussion is to begin by defining terms. If one can get beyond that stage one has a basis for agreement or intelligent disagreement. The dictionary, in its usual obscure fashion, defines public relations as "the activities of a corporation, union, government or other organization in building and maintaining sound and productive relations with special publics such as customers, employees, or stockholders, and the public at large, so as to adapt itself to its environment and interpret itself to society." Publicity, on the other hand, has been defined as the "state or process of bringing to public notice by announcements (aside from advertisements) by mention in the press, on the radio, or any means serving to effect that purpose."

The important thing to remember is that public relations is the larger operation and that publicity is contained in it. Publicity wins a public with which the "corporation, union, government or other organization" to use Webster's all-embracing list, can have relations. Someone has said that public relations was doing good and getting credit for it. The "getting credit for it" is publicity's role.

It is this interdependence of public relations upon publicity, and of publicity upon public relations which makes it difficult for a writer to outline practices, problems, and panaceas and for a reader to follow a pen which draws too fine a line between the two. For the purpose of this chapter, therefore, let us admit that the problems of public relations are frequently solved by publicity, but that publicity must operate within the framework of planned public relations.

Before beginning any organized campaign, a good public relations man will assess the assets of his client. The prime asset of the bookmobile is that it has glamor. The thought of a truck full of books, rolling over highways and rutty country roads, wheeling over roadways lined by the first spring flowers, by apple-filled orchards, by pastures of peaceful cattle, by winter-bound farms, warms the layman's heart. He thrills to the thought of the adventure, information, entertainment, instruction on those shelves; the words of "Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, R. L. S., Hazlitt, and all others," which find their way to hamlet and town, by means of the bookmobile. The editor and the reporter, the sophisticated, syndicated photographers and columnists, warm much more quickly to the story of books going out to people by means of a four-wheeled van, than people coming to books waiting in some brick and pillared building.

A second asset, related to the first, is that the bookmobile attracts

curiosity seekers. A man who will walk by a branch library, permanently fixed behind its clipped shrubbery and gold lettered doors, a man who will drive by his city library on a busy downtown corner and never know what "that building is" will stop to go through the book bus he sees parked on a corner, in a shopping center, or at a country fair. They stop and shop, and frequently buy.

Thirdly, the bookmobile advertises itself. With any reasonably legible legend it will tell the man on the street as it passes him by that this is part of a certain public library, that it carries books, and that the books are available to a borrower.

Every librarian worth his salt boasts of close personal contacts with his customers. Every branch library has the long-standing patron who brings a box of candy to the staff at Christmas; every subject department has the courtly gentleman who brings flowers wrapped in brown paper and string to the "girls"; but only the bookmobile librarian is invited regularly for stewed chicken and dumplings "when you come this way next month," who carries home a jar of strawberry preserves along with the recipe, both given to her by the cook in berry-stained apron, who left her fragrant stove long enough to return the books borrowed last month and select replacements. Most stationary librarians see their patrons in various styles of attire depending upon whether or not they have stopped at the library on their way to a tea, the grocery store, the beach, or their business. Only a bookmobile librarian serves a suds-topped reader who has come out with soap in her eyes because the truck arrived while she was washing her hair. Indeed, a bus-borne librarian does get to know the patrons in a highly personal light.

The problems claimed by bookmobile librarians in explaining poor or limited public relations programs are not so distinctive. Not only do most bookmobile librarians, decrying their own plight, echo other bookmobile librarians; they also echo librarians in other types of libraries.

They grieve over crowded conditions pointing out how this hampers good service, the most important factor in good public relations. A glance through any group of annual reports, whether of village, county or city, public or special or school, libraries will show that this is as common a malady among libraries as a virus infection in a classroom in February. The same is true of the problem of a limited book collection. True, the bookmobile—in both space and size of collection—has the problem underscored, by the very nature of its operation. By

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the same token, it is easier for their public to understand the problem, to sympathize with it, and to accept it.

Common to most libraries also is the third complaint: lack of understanding of its function by the general public and by governing bodies. County commissioners who ask, "Will people really use this kind of library?" are echoed by city councils and boards of finance who query the wisdom of an expanded budget for a new service. Publics who expect everything from a bookmobile have cousins who use a branch library with the same expectation. Ones who expect nothing pass by both the bookmobile and its fixed sister. Bookmobile librarians look for a way to show the public that it exists for adults as well as for children; that its service is not a juvenile one only. So do other librarians who, while proud of their children's collections and their story hours, would like some recognition of the fact that the children who have been taught to read and use books when young do not lose that desire and ability when they come of age. Both plead that they exist for the business man as well as the schoolboy; the homemaker as well as the child; the teacher as well as the student; the coach as well as the player.

All libraries bemoan lack of time and lack of staff to do public relations work or to carry on a publicity program. They have no time to write news stories. They cannot get away to give talks, to set up exhibits, to visit groups. While this is true of all libraries, it is perhaps aggravated in the case of a bookmobile librarian who feels the pressure of perpetual motion, envying the colleague who can at least stand on firm ground at a fixed point. The one complains that he cannot get "in" to plan his program; the other claims he cannot get "out" to carry it through.

A sixth grievance—also common to other libraries in this modern era of rapid and far-reaching communication—is the overlapping between areas of publicity and areas of service. A radio or television station covers two neighboring cities and perhaps three or more counties. An announcement about the bookmobile service of one is taken by residents of all the areas as applying to theirs, for, as the director of one county library says: "Each bookmobile user has a personal interest in his bookmobile and thinks it is the one and only." Experience has shown that this is true of libraries on firmer foundations than rubber tires. A metropolitan library announces that it will close because of an emergency and its neighbor in the big city across the boundary finds itself without customers. Announcement of a new

service or a relaxation in rules on the part of one city library will cause a run on the other libraries through the state. Bookmobiles may suffer more from this last point than other types of agencies, since the peripatetic quality of the bookmobile prevents its being on the spot to answer questions and correct misinformation.

Likewise, bookmobile directors point out that they need capable, well-trained, outgoing librarians to build good public relations as they roll along from stop to stop. Other library directors are also crying for capable, well-trained, outgoing librarians to build *their* public relations. Again, the theory, proved so many times over, that good service and individual personality build good public relations, is known to all alert librarians. All are seeking the best for their own institutions. On the other hand, bookmobiles may have more cause for complaint in their field than others. There has been a tendency in some areas to believe that anyone who can drive a truck with four speeds is a good bookmobile librarian. Public relations-wise it should be remembered that for good bookmobile service a knowledge of authors is as important as a knowledge of carburetors.

Three problems, however, are the bookmobile's alone. The first is parking. The library secure with cornerstone and mailbox never has to wonder how to let its patrons know where it will be today. Bookmobiles do. On one hand they may meet resistance when they attempt to establish a stop. Merchants have been known to object to such a big vehicle pre-empting parking space at a business center. In a residential area, homeowners are the objectors. In the second place, when a bookmobile finds it impossible to park in its usual place it loses business. Even when it merely turns a corner or moves up half a block, its customers, creatures of habit, cannot locate it.

Most librarians also wail about their time schedules—too little of it to do so much—but bookmobile librarians have the more serious reason for complaint. They cannot be detained too long by a patron at one point; spend too much time hobnobbing with the newspaper editor in a certain town; or halt to give an impromptu lecture to a visiting delegation of important officials. To do so means that the faithful borrowers at the next stop stand in the rain, their faith, their enthusiasms, and their loyalty wilting along with their hair; or, they go back home muttering imprecations against the hardworking librarian who, in attempting to build public favor at one stop, is losing it at another.

Libraries in buildings are subject to emergencies, it is true. Roofs

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are lifted by the wind, basements flood, fires break out, but whatever it is something remains to show what happened. If he misses the news in the paper or on a broadcast, when a borrower arrives, library card in hand, he finds the evidence and usually, in addition, a sign and/or a staff member to explain why service is disrupted.

These, then are the problems a public relations counsel would discover from a survey of bookmobile directors: crowded conditions; limited book collections; lack of public understanding; lack of time to promote public relations, foster publicity outlets, create a continuing publicity program; lack of staff; overlapping between publicity and service areas; personnel; parking; rigid schedules; and emergency stoppage of service.

What are the solutions? Among individual efforts bookmobile librarians have found most successful have been posted announcements, talks, newspaper pictures and stories, cooperation from local sources, television and radio broadcasts, printed flyers, and demonstrations at fairs and festivals. Over and above all these, giving force and substance to each, is that most important public relations factor, good service. This is the library's product—service—and just as a firm must have a good product to advertise, so must a library have good service to publicize.

Two curious things present themselves. While all librarians resent any implication that they are not giving good service, most will tell you how much better it could be if certain conditions—space, staff, budget, collection—were improved. With this understood, it is safe to point out that all of the above "successes" are activities (1) which they list their inability to do under the heading of problems, and (2) which are common to fixed as well as rolling libraries—even demonstrations at state and county fairs.

Progressive bookmobile directors realize that one of their greatest needs is a continuous, coordinated professional publicity program in place of the spotty if enthusiastic one that must be added to an already overcrowded schedule. Others, pressed by immediate needs, list as important the missing parts of the whole which are affecting them most at the time: need for well-produced printing and more of it, door-to-door distribution of bookmobile literature, adaptation to bookmobile use of the materials issued for small libraries.

Most readers picking up such an article as this expect a startling new cure for their ailments. Salk vaccines, insulin, penicillin—such discoveries are not everyday occurrences in the medical world. Neither

are new cures for library ills. By and large, librarians must treat their public relations and publicity problems with tried and true remedies. But as in the use of all remedies, their effectiveness depends upon their application.

In facing the bookmobile's problems these things must be kept in mind: (1) The patient's troubles are not his alone; they are suffered by other kinds of libraries, and (2) All the pains are symptomatic of malnutrition caused by lack of time, staff, and money. Although the word has become a tired one in the last few years, cooperation in liberal and frequent doses should bring relief.

Cooperation between all types of libraries and librarians is the first avenue of attack. This is compounded first of understanding within the profession itself. Although few bookmobile librarians mention it in their replies, it is true that the work of bookmobiles is frequently undervalued by other librarians. This arises, of course, from the deep-seated urge of the earnest librarian to see that every borrower has available to him full library service—reference resources, film programs, discussion groups, reading rooms, listening rooms, puppet shows, the satisfaction of shelf after shelf of books unlimited by the dimensions of a truck body. So anxious are they to have bookmobile patrons realize what they are missing, they fail to see what those patrons are getting.

Bookmobile librarians, on the other hand, must be conscious of the fact that librarians under immovable roofs also face pressures, know their patrons, and serve them well. Sold themselves on all aspects of library service, librarians can forget their own selfish promotions and work on selling the profession to the world. If library associations would ignore the sectional demands of their memberships for a period of years and work on an information campaign to show the public what libraries are, what they can do in this age of space and conflict, their importance in American life, their indispensability, their support of the citizen in his public and private life, and their own need of public support from the citizen, much would be accomplished. This takes money and it takes unbroken constant hammering away at the public consciousness.

A good publicity or advertising campaign is not a matter of an ad or two, a speech or two, and then silence. Too often, library associations, faced by a legislative campaign or similar emergency, hire a publicity agent for a few columns of newsprint during the months the legislature meets. They print several hundred folders and dis-

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tribute them at public meetings. They write letters and they button-hole senators. Heaven bless them, they frequently get the measure passed. But what happens? The publicity, the educational campaign is dropped, and the grass roots support that had taken a fair hold is soon choked with weeds of neglect.

A continuing campaign, however, integrating local, state, and national efforts would consolidate the progress made on all fronts. One of its aims would be the realization by the public of the glowing image in the word "library"—one that embraced all kinds of library service. National Library Week, and to a certain extent, Book Week, have contributed to library prestige. They have been especially valuable because of the nationwide publicity they have achieved. But libraries have been too content for too long to depend upon spotty, sporadic coverage which emphasizes a detail rather than the whole portrait.

Such contentment is ill advised. The bookmobile librarian who asked for a continuous coordinated professional publicity campaign was wise with a wisdom that the profession as a whole should have. Imbued with such wisdom, librarians would hold a clear idea of who they are and what they do. They should have just as clear an idea of the picture they want to present to the public of what they are and what they do. They will want to present it in a continuous coordinated fashion, as a complete work, not in the bits and pieces of national weeks, occasional stories, isolated campaigns which make a jigsaw puzzle, slowly fitted together and perhaps never viewed as a whole by a single person.

If the profession, associated on the national and the state level, launched this continuing professional campaign it would not only add strength and stature to the local library; it would also inspire each one to go and do likewise on its own level.

How is this done? Local libraries—be they in bookmobiles, buildings, what you will—can hire an expert to do their printing. They can get someone to write their newspaper stories, or work out a radio or television series. They may even set up a billboard or two. This solves the problem of time and staff by getting someone else to do the job. It does not solve the lack of sufficient funds for a sustained program, for knowledge and experience, purchased on today's market, come high. Neither does it succeed in producing the proper picture. Again, it is one that is painted in spots, producing a distorted image.

Ideally, there should be a single theme uniting news stories, billboards, television and radio programs, and printing. It should go

further and influence the letters that are written, the way a staff answers a patron, the manner in which complaints are handled. Intelligent public relations counsel will provide the theme. It will supply the experience and knowledge to do the jobs which now seem difficult. It will organize them so that both staff and time are used to the best ability.

All that is lacking now is money. Libraries have done a fairly successful job of county and regional cooperation in establishing library service. This is what has put bookmobiles on the road from one end of the United States to the other. Needed now are county and regional public relations programs where libraries band together to hire the professional skills they need. With pooled funds they can afford the counsel they must forego as individuals. Cooperation in the preparation of lists and other promotional materials done in quantity printings; news stories that need little alteration to adapt them to individual differences; radio and television announcements reaching the whole area of service and telling a unified story; talks given by the best speakers in the library pool for all the libraries in the pool and scheduled to secure systematic coverage; all these can be planned by the professional to impress a single dominant idea of library service. Over and above, his advice would be available to each library for specific needs peculiar to each—a new building for headquarters, a bond issue, an intensive juvenile reading promotion.

Just as they join finances to hire the skills they need, so may libraries have to cooperate on rules, regulations, schedules, and minor operational procedures, so that their stories can be told jointly in a more economical and effective fashion.

To illustrate: Three libraries operate bookmobiles in three neighboring counties. One starts its winter schedule after Labor Day; another on September 15; the third, on October 1. All of them announce their changes on the radio. All their patrons, and sometimes the radio stations, are confused by this multiplicity of bookmobile schedules. As the librarian quoted above declares: "Each bookmobile user has a personal interest in his bookmobile and thinks it is the one and only," so what follows is a grand one-two-three among the triad of counties with people in all of them waiting at the wrong stops on the wrong days. If the three had cooperated on a public relations counsel they would have been advised to change hours on the same date. Cooperation in operations would have achieved this; cooperation on publicity

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would have reached the public. Good service would replace confusion.

To sum it up, regional cooperation on library service puts bookmobiles on the road. Regional cooperation in public relations and publicity keeps them there.

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Bookmobile Operations Over the World

S. H. HORROCKS AND
J. A. HARGREAVES

IN THE LAST DECADE bookmobiles have started to operate in all continents of the world, either for the development of new library areas or for the extension of existing library facilities. Their widespread use provides a systematic coverage of many rural areas in some countries of western Europe, e.g., Great Britain. In other countries pilot schemes have been started with bookmobiles, and Unesco in particular has helped to start schemes in countries where public libraries were previously unknown.

The basis of bookmobile service was laid in the United Kingdom prior to the Second World War, firstly in a few urban areas and by 1938 in rural areas as well, when the county of Lancashire introduced a vehicle used both as a mobile branch library and as an exhibition van. Today there are almost 250 bookmobiles operating in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and they are readily divided into those used by municipal libraries and those used by county libraries.

It must be remembered that in the United Kingdom the public library service is based on a large number of autonomous library authorities established by counties, boroughs, and urban district councils. Of the mobile libraries now in operation by far the greater number are run by county libraries which serve populations ranging from over two million down to 23,000. In the main the larger urban areas maintain their own library services while the county library is responsible for the remainder of the administrative county. The county libraries themselves aim to provide a static library service in villages and towns above 1,000 population and utilize bookmobiles for both the very rural areas and the nucleated villages having a population below four figures. Most extensive use is made of them in the English counties of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire.

Mr. Horrocks is Borough Librarian, and Mr. Hargreaves is Reference Librarian, Reading Public Libraries, Reading, England.

Bookmobile Operations Over the World

A recent set of definitions issued by the County Libraries Section of the British Library Association¹ puts bookmobiles as used in the United Kingdom into two groups:

1. Mobile library: "a vehicle devised, equipped and operated to provide, as far as reasonably practicable, a service comparable to a part-time branch library."

2. Traveling library: "a vehicle of small size (i.e. exceeding 30 cwt.) shelved or otherwise equipped to provide a rural service to villages and isolated farms and houses, with short stops for issuing of books."

Incidentally other associated definitions useful in discussing mobile libraries are:

3. Exhibition (or display) van: "a vehicle fitted with shelving or other methods of displaying books, from which Local Librarians, Teachers, etc., select the stocks for their Centres, but which does not serve the public direct."

4. Delivery van: "a vehicle intended and adapted primarily for the transport of books in boxes or trays, and providing no facilities for the selection of books."

Bookmobiles in the first group are used by the municipalities, and by the county authorities in their most heavily populated areas. They include new vans, articulated vehicles, trailers, converted vans, omnibuses, and lorries. British usage of these terms is somewhat different than in North America. A 20 cwt. (hundred-weight) vehicle would be equivalent to an American one-ton truck, a 30 cwt. equal to a ton-and-a-half (1½) truck, etc. An articulated vehicle in Britain is a typical trailer-tractor type, similar to American "semi-trailers."

In North America, however, an articulated vehicle is more commonly thought of as a double-section (or more) type, connected by a flexible vestibule (for passenger types). Two or more trailers in tandem arrangement, powered by the same tractor unit, are usually referred to as tandem trailers or double trailers.

It will be understood that the administration and use of book vehicles in the United Kingdom vary quite differently from place to place, but as typical examples of current practice an outline is given of an urban service in the borough of Luton, and a rural service in Berkshire, a county located in the south of England about forty miles from London.

Luton is a borough with a population of 118,000, and after the war was among the first towns to use bookmobiles for serving an

urban area.² A reconditioned single-decker Daimler omnibus, with bodywork converted to hold 2,000 books, was used for six years to serve six outlying districts of the town. When the running of this vehicle became uneconomical a new mobile service was planned with two 22 foot long, four wheel, trailers, towed to the various service points by a tractor. The trailers started operating in February 1957.

Each bookmobile has shelving for 2,300 books on shelves fitted down each side and at the front end of the van. There is a continuous flat floor, clerestory roof for natural lighting, and staff counter placed on the near side of the vehicle close to the entrance door. Heating and lighting is by electricity provided by plugging into the mains, at outlets, at the fixed service points.

There are ten service points, or stops, carefully pre-selected and provided with permanent hard standings, for parking. The total circulating stock of the bookmobiles is approximately four thousand books, half of which are non-fiction. All the stock is for adult readers. Hours of opening are from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. and the vans are operated by two full-time and two part-time staff. Only one assistant is on duty at a time in each vehicle.

A contrast with this wholly urban service with fixed service points is a bookmobile serving a rural area with no large center of population in its midst. This is situated in Berkshire, a county of 725 square miles and a population of 365,900. The North Berkshire mobile library service (one of two in the county) serves places in an area of the county which would not otherwise have easy access to library books, apart from static centers with limited book stocks in some of the villages. This bookmobile, which began to operate in February 1960, is a van mounted on an Austin two/three ton chassis, which operates from a site near Wantage close to the center of the region served.

The bookmobile operates in fortnightly cycles over nine routes in the northern part of the county. During this time it calls at 133 service points for anything between ten minutes and half an hour. Stopping time depends on the size of the community, which may be a village, hamlet, or isolated farmstead. The service is staffed by a librarian and a driver/assistant, and operates between 10 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. There is at present a circulating stock of 3,750 adult and 1,700 junior books.

Mobile libraries have not been used in Scotland to the same extent as in England. In central Scotland, the most thickly populated part of the country, bookmobiles are in use in Dunbarton, Fife, Midlothian,

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and Stirling. With the exception of one vehicle in Dunbarton all of them are on five ton bus chassis and are used in both urban and rural districts.

In Midlothian two vehicles are in use and a third is on order. The three vehicles are anticipated to fulfill all the requirements for mobile libraries in the county in the foreseeable future. One is used as a stop-gap service in a coal mining area where it is expected that a branch library will be built in the near future, but the second is used mainly for rural villages and small mining communities; the third, a small vehicle, will take the library service to small rural hamlets, isolated houses, and farms. Whereas the first two have weekly visits to specified stops of an hour or more duration, the third will have fortnightly visits for shorter periods on the usual pattern of a rural service.

In Stirling the one vehicle in use covers both urban areas with stands of an hour or more and a rural district covering isolated houses. The area requiring this service within the county is by no means covered by this one vehicle. The same applied to Fife where the one vehicle in operation originally served entirely as a stop-gap service in urban areas requiring branch libraries but with the development of the branch library service in the county has now become available for a part of its time to serve the scattered rural districts. Two further vehicles are required before these rural areas can be said to be covered.

In Dunbarton the larger vehicle operates as a service point at some of the larger villages and in the more outlying housing schemes but the new fifty cwt. unit serves a purely rural area, with stops at individual houses.

The only other mobile services in operation are in the extreme northwest of Scotland in the County of Sutherland, in the largest of the outer Hebrides, the island of Lewis (Ross and Cromarty), and the extreme southwest the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. The Sutherland mobile library is perhaps the most interesting as it serves undoubtedly the most difficult area at present served by a mobile library in Britain. The county is large and the population exceedingly small; it is broken up by deep sea lochs and mountain chains and the van serves the small pockets of population hemmed in by loch and mountain on a three-week cycle. The roads are narrow and consequently the present vehicle is rated at twenty-five cwt. with a capacity for one thousand books. Some indication of the use of this mobile is shown by the fact that the total stock used is five thousand. It is not possible for the vehicle to return to base after each journey and it is

away from base for two weeks from Monday to Friday; during each of these two weeks the librarian works for eleven hours each day and is free from duty on the third week when it covers the area immediately adjacent to headquarters. The Lewis mobile library covers the island on a four week schedule, using a vehicle on a five ton chassis.

In the southwest, the small county of Kirkcudbright has a full-sized five ton unit which covers all places in the county with populations of less than eight hundred on a fortnightly schedule. No other counties have mobile libraries but it may be mentioned that two counties, Perth and Banff, use exhibition vans for the exchange of books at library centers.

In Ireland bookmobiles were introduced into County Antrim in 1952. Now three vans make fortnightly calls on service points, doing nine daily tours of eight hours each. Each vehicle serves an area with between thirty and forty thousand people. This is at present Ireland's only bookmobile service.

On the continent of Europe bookmobiles of one type or another are in operation in Scandinavia, Germany, France, Belgium, and Austria. Their introduction to Belgium and Austria is very recent.

The terrain of Sweden and Norway presents special problems for the operation of a library service. Communities are scattered, distances are long and access is difficult. For example, the Swedish county of Norrbotten has an area of 40,500 square miles, a quarter of the country's area.³ Before 1950, when a bookmobile was introduced, it was difficult to get books to the remote small villages and lumber camps, over the long and poor roads. In the first eight years of the bookmobile's work the circulation of books increased by almost sixty thousand.

A second method by which mobile service is given in Sweden is the rail bus or train ⁴ of the Kiruna Public Library which started operating in 1950 along a hundred mile stretch of the Luleå-Narvik railway for seven hours on Sundays, the day on which no iron ore trains are running. In 1957 the Gällivare-Malmberget Public Library started a similar service on another section of the Luleå-Narvik line. The Swedish State Railways cooperate with the county libraries of Umeå and Luleå in running a monthly book train along stretches of their line.

Sweden's third form of bookmobile is the floating library or book boat.⁵ The islands off Stockholm and Göteborg are served in this way. Boats are hired for two journeys a year, one in spring and the other

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in autumn. The "library boat" which tours the islands of the outer archipelago of Stockholm is a gunboat of the Swedish navy and is the first boat to enter the waters when the winter ice of the Baltic breaks up. Göteborg Public Library uses a hired passenger steamer to serve the fishermen, boat-builders, and others and their families on the islands off Sweden's west coast. It has a lending library of between four and five thousand volumes for adults and children on the upper deck. On the lower deck is a reading room with periodicals and newspapers. The service is run by the head of the county library department and two assistants.

The tour of each boat lasts about ten to eleven days. In one tour from Göteborg sixty-four places are visited and nearly nine thousand books issued. From Stockholm about the same number of places are visited and four thousand books issued to islands which are more sparsely populated than those on the west coast.

The book boat is also a feature of Norwegian library service, where one operates from Trondheim. Another boat had its maiden trip from Bergen in September 1959, carrying over six thousand volumes to serve the people living on the islands in the Hordaland, Sogn, and Fjordane areas. In Denmark the Svenborg County Library employs a high-powered motor boat carrying five-hundred books, with a trained librarian to visit the small islands of Birkholm, Hjortö and Skarö.

Bookmobiles are not in general use in Finland, but they are used in the Swedish-speaking area, generally making monthly visits.

Bookmobiles in Germany, at present few in number, are confined to urban areas. They are used mainly for the suburbs of large towns which already have well organized library services. Among these towns are Augsburg, Brunswick, Hanover, Ludwigsburg, München, Offenbach, Trier, and Zehlendorf, ranging in population from 63,000 to 830,000.

One of the first to experiment with bookmobiles was München. In 1928 a tram was converted into a "library on tramlines" with a stock of approximately two thousand volumes. It was used to test the need for permanent libraries along various parts of München's tramway network. Although still in operation there is a very limited future for this type of vehicle, owing to the increased density of the traffic. In 1951 München operated the first motorized library in Germany.

As in the United Kingdom use has been made of converted as well as new vehicles. Solingen, a town of 165,000 with many scattered outlying communities, has had a second-hand Mercedes-Benz omni-

bus since 1955.⁶ Owing to the limited amount of money available for conversion it was not possible to board up the broad side windows nor to provide natural top lighting. To take advantage of the existing natural lighting four small two-sided metal bookstacks were installed, supported by uprights bolted to the floor and roof. The stacks are fixed at right angles to the windows, two on either side of the vehicle and there is some additional shelving fixed below window level on the boxed-in wheel-cases. Twelve to thirteen hundred books can be carried, and it has been found that this is sufficient to cope with two loan issues without having to restock. The circulating stock is four thousand. There are eight service points which are visited weekly, and it is staffed by trained librarians and a driver/assistant.

Ludwigsburg's bookmobile is a specially built articulated vehicle of similar pattern to bookmobiles in operation at Offenbach and Trier. A larger vehicle than that of Solingen, it carries a stock of 1,800 adult and 1,750 junior books, and there is space behind the counter for an additional four hundred books. Junior and adult sections are divided, the former being situated on the higher level above the wheelbox at the front. In addition to good natural lighting, there are fluorescent light fittings supplied by batteries, which also light two exterior show windows near the entry door. There are eight scheduled stops per week and the bookmobile is staffed by a librarian-in-charge and an assistant.

Vienna Municipal Libraries began to operate Austria's first bookmobile in April 1958.⁷ The specially designed six-wheeled articulated vehicle, whose trailer is thirty-five feet long and eight feet wide has several interesting features. The interior of the bookmobile is divided into three sections. The entrance is from the rear, by a door which the reader outside or the librarian at the counter can open by a press button. The section first entered is a reading room containing an umbrella stand, clothes' hooks, and ten chairs with writing rests. The reading room is divided from the library stock by a counter, as this is a closed access library. It was considered that conditions would be too cramped for an open access system.

The front end of the vehicle is curtained off to form a staff work-room, in which a desk is built across the far end at which two people can work. Under the middle of the desk are six catalog drawers and two wide drawers. The book stack is continued in this part of the bookmobile, and carries three thousand volumes. It visits twenty-one service points in eighteen outlying districts of northeast Vienna. Roadside indicators mark the service points and times of the bookmobile's

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visits, which are twice monthly. The service begins alternately at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. in order to reach a greater number of readers. A loud-speaker and film apparatus are available for lectures, poetry readings, and filmshows. For these extension activities the counter can be opened to make a larger room.

The introduction of the bookmobile to Belgium took place in Antwerp in February 1959, and it is at the moment the only one in the country.⁸ This vehicle, thirty feet long by eight feet wide, has its entrance on the rear side immediately opposite the driver's seat, which has the counter to its right and back. The exit is on the rear nearside, where there is also a small desk for a library assistant. The bookmobile holds 2,400 volumes of which seven hundred are junior books, and there is a reserve of four thousand volumes at the garage. The bookmobile operates on four days each week. It has ten stops at seven different service points. At the three places it serves twice in the week, opening hours alternate between morning and afternoon. The earliest and latest hours of opening are 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Like its German and Austrian counterparts the bookmobile has a large exterior display panel, as well as a decorative motif on the side, announcing its purpose.

In France, although in the main their vehicles are used as selection vans for the use of the libraries only, there are some conventional bookmobiles. One operated by the Tours Municipal Library is of special interest, as it is used specifically to serve the town's schools.⁹ A converted motor-coach holding 3,400 books started work as a bookmobile in 1956. It calls once every three weeks at each school. Each class is allowed about fifteen minutes to make its selection. As a child chooses a book he hands it to an assistant and all the books chosen are issued collectively to the class and returned collectively at the next visit. A similar system is used by the Grenoble bookmobile.

A bookmobile operating under special conditions, serving a particular group of readers is the "bibliotrain."¹⁰ This was put into service by the Libraries Section for the South-east Region of the French National Railways in April 1957. The carriage which does a thirty-three day tour covering 1,500 miles, is a self-contained unit, which in addition to a library with space for seven thousand volumes, has living quarters for the librarian. The "bibliotrain" tours twenty-six centers, serving twelve thousand railwaymen and their families. In addition to its loan services it provides a reading room with reference books and periodicals.

Unesco offered Greece its first bookmobile, inaugurated in July

1957, equipped with projector and screen for film showings. The Greek government recently bought two more vehicles. The mobile service now regularly takes books to 342 lending centers and provides a demonstration of modern library extension services all over Greece. It has eighteen thousand books in circulation and approximately fifty thousand registered readers.

Asian library services have also benefited from Unesco's help. The Delhi Public Library was the first Unesco library pilot project, and as a part of this a bookmobile started to operate in 1953.¹¹ It is a five-ton Austin vehicle accommodating about three thousand books. It is fitted with a loud-speaker to announce its arrival. Serving both urban and rural communities within a twenty mile radius of the Central Library, it visits fifteen service points. The books carried are mainly in Hindi, with a small number in Urdu and English. It has been found necessary to vary the stock according to the community visited. There is a higher rate of literacy in the urban areas than in the rural areas. Delhi has now received a second mobile library, provided by school children of the United States through the Unesco Gift Coupon Scheme.

In Singapore Unesco has provided a grant of \$2,000 towards a bookmobile to demonstrate work with children. A motor coach has been purchased and converted for the purpose but has not yet been put into service. Two articulated vehicles have also been constructed in Singapore which it is hoped will act as bookmobiles. A special feature of these are the two foot two inch book trays which can be lifted out when full of books and taken to a reserve book room, from which similar full trays can be returned to the bookmobile. This method of construction, in place of fixed shelves, allows a quick change of stock to cater for the linguistic variations in Singapore, where Malay, Tamil, or Chinese is spoken in different districts.

There are seventy-eight bookmobiles in Japan, but they are used mainly for transporting books and cultural activities, such as film shows. For example Kochi Citizens' Library has two vehicles; one which can accommodate twenty persons and 1,700 books; the other for five persons and six hundred books to visit the less accessible places. They visit the book deposit stations monthly.

Thailand has an unconventional bookmobile.¹² In the northeast of the country the roads are little more than cart tracks which put motor vehicles out of the question. In 1957 a Unesco expert organized a pony cart service to bring books to some of the villages. It consists

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of a two-wheeled cart with three rows of shelves on the outside of the platform where the driver sits, the whole covered by a curved roof to shed the water. Except for the shelves, which are of wood and the floor which is bamboo, all is made of hardboard for durability and lightness. The sides form horizontal doors, shut while the cart is traveling. To open, the top half lifts up forming a shade for the readers, the bottom lowers to make a shelf to rest books while browsing. The books are held in place by movable bookends.

In southeast Asia, a bookmobile is due to arrive in Baghdad early in 1961. It will work in connection with the literacy campaign in Iraq. A Unesco libraries expert will organize the services.

West Africa's first bookmobiles were seen in Ghana.¹³ They are, strictly speaking, display vans. The books are carried on outside shelving with extra shelving in cupboards inside. The sides of the vans are hinged near the top to form a cover from the sun when raised. The bodies are built locally on thirty cwt. commercial chassis. The readers do not go inside them, so they are not equipped with air conditioning, lighting, etc. Boxes of fifty books are issued to subscribers who choose their own books when the van calls.

The book van service is operated from three centers, Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi. At the beginning of 1958 there were 450 book boxes on issue at one hundred places, half to individuals and half to institutions such as schools and colleges. The vans visit the subscribers three times a year on treks of from three to sixteen or seventeen days. The Accra van is on the road for about two hundred days and the Kumasi van is on the road for about 120 days in each year.

There are now public library systems operating in each of the three regions of Nigeria. One, the Eastern Region Library Board which began operation in 1957 was started as a Unesco Pilot Project. In 1958 Unesco presented the Eastern Region Library Board with a bookmobile built in England to a specification suitable for a tropical area. It can accommodate 1,600 books and is fitted with electric lighting from a generator carried on the vehicle.

This bookmobile was put into operation in the area around the township of Enugu. It serves various small towns and villages located both in the bush and bordering the one or two metalled trunk roads running through the area. The issue of books in all cases is to individuals and calls are made at the various stopping places of about half an hour's duration once per fortnight. The vehicle also calls at a number of schools in the area, both primary and secondary, and in

the former schools the older children in the last two years of study are allowed access to the books. The loan to these children is on an individual basis but the supervision of the borrowing and returning is done by the headmaster. Approximately half the books on the shelves are for adults and half for junior readers.

During the first six months the vehicle was purely experimental and was designed not only to find out the best stopping places and type of reader who could best be supplied in this manner, but also to find out the type of books which readers in that territory would wish to have. Much of the information collected in the early stages is now being considered. A second bookmobile has been purchased and was put into operation immediately after the Independence celebrations of October 1960.

Bookmobiles in South America have also received a valuable impetus through the interest of Unesco. The Medellin pilot public library in Colombia was provided with a bookmobile in 1956.¹⁴ It carries two thousand books and makes up to fifty stops in a week of one or two hours duration. Its aim has been to create interest with a view to establishing permanent libraries at suitable points. The first two years of working led to the establishment of a branch library in a clinic and seven other permanent stops in schools, factories, and suburbs.

In 1958 Unesco gave the Callao Public Library in Peru a bookmobile complete with audio-visual equipment. Within twelve months the loans registered by the bookmobile were more than twice those of the Public Library itself—25,888 compared to 11,729.

In Brazil, the Industrial Social Service has used bookmobiles since 1948 to supply "book chests" to factories, works' clubs and other meeting places of workers. These chests containing about sixty books are changed at three-month intervals.

In the West Indies, three mobile libraries are operated by the government of Trinidad and Tobago. They serve rural areas making fortnightly or monthly visits through eighty-nine townships and villages. The bookmobile usually stops at one spot in each community for a period of thirty minutes to two hours. Many of the service points are at schools, but some special organizations are served as, for example, a sanatorium and a brick factory.

The number of readers at each stop varies between forty and two hundred. The present vehicles carry 1,500 books each on inside shelves with no special adaptation for the tropics except a fan. A fourth

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bookmobile is nearing completion which will carry 2,500 books. This is intended for suburban areas with adult service inside and junior service outside. The bookmobile in Tobago operates an extra service to schools during school hours. At each school the children choose their books, class by class. As an indication of some of the problems involved one of the library rules reads "books must not be used as umbrellas."

In Australia bookmobiles operate in three of the states, New South Wales, Tasmania, and Victoria. Much of the sub-continent is not suitable for bookmobile operation owing to the long distances involved, the scattered distribution of population, and the road conditions which are frequently poor.

In New South Wales all the bookmobiles operate within a radius of eighty miles from Sydney, with the exception of that at Orange which is two hundred miles to the west of Sydney. In Orange local councils have combined to run a regional library which operates a bookmobile to serve outlying areas of the city and the surrounding rural area. A semi-trailer carrying three thousand books has a fortnightly schedule to visits of fifty-one stopping places.

The first bookmobile operated by a public library in Australia was put into service by Wollongong City Council in 1949. There are now fifteen bookmobiles operating in New South Wales, usually in closely settled areas where the library service is well developed. The majority of the vehicles are of the semi-trailer type, carrying from three to five thousand books. When first used in 1957 Sydney City Council's semi-trailer bookmobile carrying five thousand volumes was claimed to be the largest in the world. It visits eleven stopping places on a fortnightly schedule, except for one stop which is visited weekly. This Council has another vehicle which brings books to the door for the sick, elderly and "shut-ins." Nearly all the bookmobiles in New South Wales visit their service points at weekly or fortnightly intervals.

The State Library of Tasmania has two bookmobiles both of which have been put into service recently. Tasmania is best suited of the Australian states for this type of service as its area is not so extensive and its settled regions are quite compact. One three ton bookmobile works within a radius of about thirty miles from Hobart and serves eight municipalities. The other bookmobile serving the Launceston region started to operate in August 1960.

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Service covering the whole of New Zealand.¹⁵ This is not a service to individuals but to groups, involving bulk loans of not less than fifty books at a time for the smallest group libraries up to one thousand books at a time for the free public libraries in boroughs. There were 118 libraries controlled by local authorities and eighty-eight small independent libraries in the country which were served by the County Library Service at March 31, 1960. There are seven bookmobiles to visit these places, two each based on Hamilton and Palmerston North in the North Island, and three based on Christchurch in the South Island. The vehicles visit each library three times a year. They are designed to take 1,600 to 2,000 books.

Inside the cab is the librarian's home, for he may be away from his base from sixteen to twenty-six weeks at a time, sometimes covering five thousand miles. Each unit carries a small work bench, and cabinets for its records. Storage space in later models has provided for tiny wardrobes, suitcases, camp stretchers, mattresses, and a primus stove. In addition to the County Library Service there are four bookmobiles operated by the public libraries of Auckland, Dunedin, Papatoetoe, and Wellington. The Wellington bookmobile visits four suburbs, giving service for 151, 101, 100, and 104 days in the past year, with an issue totalling 99,102 books. It makes use of the electricity outlets at permanent parking places. Hours of service are displayed on the footpath. Papatoetoe Borough Mobile Library Service started in September 1958, and uses a trailer type vehicle, which was originally a mobile totalisator unit. It carries 1,600 books and is staffed by voluntary helpers. It is open eleven hours a week at four service points visited once weekly. Local milk bar proprietors hold a key to the bookmobile at each point.

It should be clear from the foregoing account that the bookmobile as an instrument of library service is rapidly becoming appreciated in all parts of the world. Although in some countries it is used as little more than a transport service, in all countries it is bringing books to the notice of people who have hitherto had no access to them and certainly not in the quantity which the bookmobile can display.

The bookmobile as a means for serving the rural population seems to be more fully appreciated in countries of the British Commonwealth and in the United States than in some of the countries of Western Europe such as Germany where its potentialities have not yet been fully realized and a service to rural areas is regarded as uneconomical. There appears a wide variation in the type of vehicle

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used and the amount of stock carried, but on the whole these factors are conditioned by the country in which the bookmobile is operating.

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Bookmobiles in the Libraries of Tomorrow

HAROLD GOLDSTEIN

SINCE THE FIRST BOOKMOBILE honked and wheezed through its backroads circuit in 1905,¹ the society in which libraries developed, along with the art of locomotion by gasoline-engined vehicles, has changed tremendously.

While libraries are by far the senior member of this particular combination of social needs and contrived satisfaction, the junior member has changed more rapidly. Mechanical developments in our society have come faster than the changes within libraries to match them. With respect to the bookmobile, its physical form has changed somewhat, but its basic service usefulness has not. Adjustment to it—or acceptance of it—has come a long way, however, with considerable evidence that there will be even more widespread use and availability of bookmobiles in the future.

Today's bookmobile is a tribute to the combined interest and genius of librarian and vehicle designers and manufacturers. On one not-too-large unit is found a miniature collection of materials, minimum staff to service these, and a philosophy of service worthy of librarianship. True, the miniature collection is usually no more than that, even though other main resources stand ready to aid and round it out; the staff is not always as professionally capable as might be desired; and the general provision of service is limited both by the vehicle's ability to move and the places it can go. The bookmobile is an adjunct and no more to the services of its parent institution; in fact, as an adjunct it may have its main *raison d'être*, going out of use as permanent service centers arise to replace partial facilities.

This sketchy rationale is what the field generally has said about bookmobiles and their place in present day library operations. But what is equally true is that librarians have not gone much beyond this level of thinking or operation to prove whether the thesis is

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correct: that a bookmobile can be no more than an ancillary arm of the main institutions, serving as long as better agencies are not available. In the light of generally universal problems of physical plant renewal, fewer professionals for increased position needs, and no greater measure of support by the general population, is it possible that full library service through fixed centers will ever rise beyond a minimum attainment to the point where bookmobiles will not only be discarded, but never again necessary?

Costs for metropolitan areas alone are staggering in terms of what must and should be done for library buildings, budgets, and book collections. Admitting that inferior units (in details of operation, if not in concept) will hardly help librarians reach the level of importance needed to provide support for redoing the prime units, is it still possible to expect such renewal with any conceivable time period? What about the successful instigation of library services under the Library Services Act, which, if properly nourished, will demand for themselves additions and extensions whose total cost will be an equally staggering figure, separate from renewal or expansion of existing units? How should the idea of bookmobile—or any other extension—service be viewed for the library of the next decade or half-century in the light of such practical considerations?

It seems to this writer that there are three possibilities for future bookmobile use:

1. Perpetuation of current models and types, with some improvements in the size of book stock, handling and routing of the unit, and more attention to the maximum number of units for a specific operation;
2. Development of additional types and other vehicular units; and
3. Revision in part of the concept of permanent service centers.

Perpetuation of current ideas and models, with some improvements.—Some cities and counties have begun bookmobile use after considerable debate as to selection of the rolling stock: trailers, standard "one-piece" bookmobiles, or tractor-trailer bookmobiles. Most of the considerations involving such selection revolve around book capacity, purchase and maintenance costs, and maneuverability and flexibility. By and large, more single-unit bookmobiles are in operation than any other types for reasons of staffing, handling, legal restrictions of size on city streets, etc. An exception is Midland, Michigan, which had two trailers built to be moved by one panel truck serving as general

vehicle in addition to its hauling assignments. Most boards are convinced, however, that specially built vehicles for library use ought to be the one-unit bookmobile.

The maximum load for library service numbers around five thousand books, and only the largest trailer-tractors are capable of this number. Hence any mobile unit is at best a portion of a branch or extension collection, and thus subject to criticism on the point of sufficiency of resources and potentialities. In addition to the limits of book stock, few libraries have put into service simultaneously more than one unit, usually waiting until one proves itself before adding additional ones. This practice has resulted in obvious difficulties of providing, at least according to any standards, even a minimum collection and service to new or changed areas within the library's responsibilities. Where, perhaps, twenty-five thousand books are a minimum—requiring four to six bookmobiles—it is obvious that one unit put into service will hardly make up the difference.

Since a library could quickly spend \$100,000 for five bookmobiles of adequate size and with proper equipment, it is easy to understand the difficulties which librarians have faced in their attempt to spread their institutions throughout many service areas. While \$100,000 will buy very little in the way of permanent building these days, probably the psychological difference between conceiving of a permanent fixture *versus* a moving one has been a strong part of the decisions made about expansion of library services. Yet it is virtually impossible to concede that bookmobile service, unless instituted with the same concern as branch service, will be satisfactory in either revamping old ideas or filling in the gaps made necessary by the growth of service areas. What is needed are bold gestures in the direction of sufficiency in providing accepted models and services.

If library X, currently considering its service needs, contemplates bookmobile usage, it should set up an experimental formula which equates fixed unit services with the restrictions of mobile operations. It must realize that one bookmobile does not equal several branches (or stations or any other lesser unit) for the very simple reason that one bookmobile cannot be in more than one place at the same time. Routing schedules alone should remind administrators and trustees that, while bookmobiles are extremely valuable, one vehicle cannot either carry or maintain the same service load as two or more fixed locations. Hence it follows that the inception of bookmobile service should allow for the number of vehicles which could be equal to two

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or more fixed locations. The matter of a short stop versus a long one is in essence the same argument as that of how many hours the branches should be open to the public. With all the need and good will in the world, the public cannot use libraries if these are not open or not there when they want to enter and seek information. The fact that commercial enterprises are operated on schedules which are convenient to the patron (but not necessarily to the operator) should be a reminder that librarians must just as carefully calculate open times for maximum return on the huge investment of staff, stock, and service.

Another aspect should be pointed out here. If bookmobiles are conceived of as catering to the lighter needs of the public, then it is not so important whether they meet patron needs as to time, collections, etc. The patrons who appear at the door of the bookmobile at 10 a.m. to pick up a pair of mysteries or romances could conceivably be there at 2, 4, or 8 p.m. But if this is the bulk of service objectives assigned to the bookmobile, there are probably cheaper and more efficient ways to accomplish such limited requirements. It is hardly justifiable to spend \$10,000-\$20,000 (1960 prices) for a mobile unit to haul 50 per cent juveniles and 50 per cent light reading just to show that the library is "modern" in its approach.

A worthy and rewarding objective would be the supplying of a balanced print and non-print materials collection, limited though it must be, through the use of as many units as are needed to substitute for fixed locations. Improvements in staffing, to provide the best help rather than lesser quality, might be the first step. The idea that, since the bookmobile cannot service the reader very well anyhow, a personable and reasonably responsible staff member will suffice is only another expression of experimentation with the new toy rather than conviction about a totally new service. There would be less likelihood of such operations being conceived of as temporary or makeshift if bookmobiles were generally staffed by trained and experienced personnel. With the built-in limitations of book stock, it would appear that only a trained librarian would be capable of realizing the maximum potential from a minimum collection.

Additional improvements, such as better communications between mobile units and the main or other fixed service centers, would help impress the public with the idea that the new service is conscious of its shortcomings and is attempting to overcome them. Such a device as the citizens band radio-telephone could provide ready refer-

ence answers, ascertain whether books were available elsewhere, and even be used for readers advisor contacts. The investment is small in comparison with the potential return. No licenses are required of the operators; there would be no interference with other communications; and the library service *in toto* would be better coordinated through the use of such a simple addition.

An older, more vexing problem should be noted. Traditionally in most systems, branches do not have book titles which the main library lacks, possibly on the assumption that such collections would be too difficult to administer without some type of union catalog to provide all readers with equal opportunity and knowledge about the library's resources. While this statement is obviously not binding on all library operations, it is true that few systems have attempted to build branch—hence bookmobile—collections on a different basis from the main building collection. Aside from the pertinent and accurate reminder that there are basic titles worthy of duplication in all the library's service centers, since branches are not replicas of the central resource, why not build bookmobile collections from a different rationale? If bookmobile A, serving such and such areas, carries a collection built on the knowledge and needs of the people of these areas, why must bookmobile or branch B, C, etc. have the same titles and range of collection? Why not provide each unit with different kinds of collections, having some common elements (based on *Standard Catalog*, etc.) but with more differences than commonalities? Extensive use of quality paperbacks, careful selection of fringe titles, etc., could provide stimulating and expanding reading experiences for adults and children, with the possibility of finding out more than is now known about the likes and dislikes of readers. Inexpensive books can be hardy, easily added or deleted from collections, and might be the best way to capitalize on present output for fields in which libraries are normally weak. The problems of charging, etc., while not to be disdained, are only mechanical ones capable of being handled with the present knowledge and availability of mechanical devices. What is lacking is the desire to experiment with and evaluate such practices.

There is valid and valiant use to be made of bookmobiles, if attention is paid to the number required for a particular system, to the book stock and staff responsible for servicing these resources, and to the problems of adequate coverage within a particular system.

Development of additional or new types of mobile units.—Mention

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was made above of variations—rare in number—to be found among types of bookmobiles in general service. Still to be seen are panel trucks whose outside surfaces are hinged covers opening to reveal bookshelves inside. Not to be seen, at this writing at least, are any units developed specifically as a result of experimentation with the needs of bookmobile service. No system has yet built and used an articulated type (two units in tandem, with flexible passage or covered passway); no manufacturer has described anything like the Greyhound *Scenicruiser* (two-level passenger bus) adapted to bookmobile use. One very good reason why this is true is cost: bus companies can pay for and amortize their expensive units from public fares; libraries cannot. An expensive bookmobile would be in the range of \$25,000–\$28,000; a large motorbus might cost as much as \$50,000. Another not-so-good reason might be the lack of desire to experiment with prototypes whose success cannot be guaranteed in advance. Whatever the reasons, no startling types have appeared different from those to be seen in any typical bookmobile operation.

One possible development which embodies existing types, but which calls for a new approach, might be the multiple-unit operation. Several large bookmobiles (33'–35', 4,000 book capacity) could be internally arranged and stocked so as to provide far greater approximation to a branch library than is possible with one unit. One unit would carry a typical reference collection, with foldup tables and chairs; a second unit would be a children's bookmobile; a third one, adult circulation and related services. The three units would travel together, and would be parked so that a patron could go from one to the other by passing through a covered walk (as in some city bus stops). The bookmobiles could be arranged as the library saw fit; the one constant would be the "fleet" idea which made sure that no stop received service from fewer than the three units.

The physical arrangement within each bookmobile would not be much different than typical units. It would probably be necessary to have an intercommunication system connecting all three units; the unit designated for reference work might need special care in allocating shelf space and arrangements; and more seating space would be provided in the other units. Think of the adequacy of such a fleet—carrying perhaps 13,000 items with a staff of three librarians and two or three driver/clerks—in comparison with a single bookmobile. The cost would be about tripled; but even with three such multiple fleets in operation, the total bill for library services would be far less than

the cost of two small branches, their staffs and collections. The flexibility of such an arrangement would be immeasurable in dollars, but unquestionably the ability of the units to supply an approximation of standard service would be more measurable in comparison with fixed unit services.

Improvements in materials used for boats, tents, etc., leads to some speculation about additional ideas for future bookmobile types. It is possible to build a large trailer-tractor which could contain facilities to be erected at the stop and detached from the unit itself. For example, a large "pop-up" type tent, erected for campers in five minutes (according to the ads) could be used for a small children's corner, or for story hours, lectures, and even small group film showings or meetings. Other separate units could be set up quickly, connected by intercom to the main unit, and be serviced by staff members specially assigned for the location and time. Such facilities would not be overly expensive, and would help to compensate for space differences between mobile and fixed units. Many units now in operation have provided a canopy on one side of the bookmobile where story hours are held, or for other activities requiring more space than inside the unit. Some of the additional space requirements could be permanently placed—such as fiberglass rooms, aluminum sheds, etc.—and the bookmobile would park alongside them in such a position that it serves as the control center. While these suggestions raise many administrative problems, the writer does not feel they are insuperable. Climate, distances, and other factors would be prime determinants in the acceptance of such ideas for any particular library.

A third variation in form of vehicle might be mentioned. One of the main contributions of the recent A.L.A. Standards² has been the emphasis on systems of library operations. Many of the present single libraries must be connected into some form of cohesive amalgamation in order to survive mounting costs, shifts in population, and a host of other problems. A great number of these small libraries are to be found around cities, or in close proximity to each other; many of them are on connecting railroad lines. America's railroads today face financial burdens due to declining passenger incomes, and tremendous competition from trucking operations. Yet Railway Express Agencies exist at almost every "whistle stop," and postal service is not denied any community. It is possible that a railway library car (or cars) could be developed which could, under the auspices of a system, supply better library service than is now available. (Several of these uses

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are discussed in the previous chapter by S. H. Horrocks and J. A. Hargreaves.)

Such a unit (composed of one or more cars) could be moved to several locations a week—or for whatever period the system agrees upon. A minimum of three cars could provide the equivalent of a fairly adequate branch library, with provisions for the normal services to be expected from such a service center. The staff could be drawn from the local libraries which might be closed when the traveling unit appears. Costs of operation might be high in comparison with the single library within the area of operation; but the profession is generally agreed now, after surveys have so forcefully and unanimously made the point, that the inadequate library will never be able by itself to find a base of support capable of bringing it up to minimum standards of operation. The administrative problems conjured up by such a suggestion seem frightening; but so did those involved in the establishment of regional processing centers. Whether such an idea is practical is dependent on fixed railroad costs and the interests of the librarians in attempting to solve their service problems.

Revision in part of the concept of permanent service centers.—There are many libraries, either single building or multiple centers, which cannot hope to rebuild or relocate in the foreseeable future. These institutions are faced with the same problems as those which are able to add additional space, build new quarters, and adapt to the changes demanded of them. Possibly the only answer for the library without hope for additions is consideration of basic changes within its present space involving the addition of bookmobiles. Such libraries may have to think of bookmobiles as prime elements of their main service center rather than as extension agencies.

The transition to a truly public-service centered library from the traditional warehouse—or vault—indicated that most older buildings lacked adequate public service areas. Where space was available, in many instances it was vertical space rather than horizontal area. Many small cities spent a great deal of money to add space required to provide for growing library use, only to find that in two decades or so the additional investment in the physical plant was buried under the avalanche of new needs. Traditional library practices make it necessary that one building serve for all the needs involved in serving the public, including the utilization of space for internal needs which, while necessary, may deprive public service functions of valuable area. There are indeed few libraries which process their books or

favor their staffs with lounge facilities anywhere but in their own buildings. Business, on the other hand, has decentralized in many ways: separate buildings exist for offices, for accounting, for stock handling, for experimentation, etc. There seems to be little likelihood that most libraries are financially capable of or interested in following this pattern.

Bookmobile services may help provide an answer. Almost all—if not 100 per cent—of bookmobiles in use today are extension units, replacing branches or holding the fort in newly developed areas until such time as more permanent buildings will take over. Yet the same use of bookmobiles could be extended to cover the problems of those libraries which are faced with long term space difficulties. It is suggested that these libraries replan their present facilities to include only technical processing, reference and periodical collections, and staff recuperation areas. All other services will be assigned to bookmobiles. While this idea may be disturbing to those who conceive of library service as necessarily associated with a landmark or memorial, it offers a practical way out of the difficulty of a major expenditure for capital plant improvement. How else, for example, will some of the smaller buildings, now hopelessly bulging and in need of repairs, be replaced with modern, air-conditioned, attractive quarters?

Services need not suffer through such a move. The use of any type of mobile units, coupled together side by side or in any suitable manner, could provide far better and more flexible interiors than the old buildings. In addition, seating and traffic flow can be arranged for maximum efficiency and staff convenience, to say nothing of the patron's benefit. The cost of such moves would be fractionally that of rebuilding, even though admittedly one conceives of such quarters as temporary. Is it just thinking or the actual longevity of the unit which has set the idea that mobiles are only expedients to be done away with when money is available for new buildings? So far as the life of such units is concerned, many bookmobiles are in their tenth or twelfth years of service; most of these have taken terrific punishment in travel over all sorts of roads, etc. Such units could reasonably be expected to last much longer if they were not driven thousands of miles over areas of varying demand on the chassis.

Another aspect of librarianship is also to be stressed. For the most part, technical services and processes are hidden (although still needful of large areas) from the public. One good reason they are so

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closely secreted, it is suggested here, is that most old buildings have forced these necessary operations into leftover areas, useless for public needs. Most of the library's public has no idea of the work done, its relation to the usual public services, or the kinds of experts who perform the tasks. Would it not be a valuable public relations asset to throw open these less-visited and publicized areas for patron inspection as well as for librarian pride in the nature of such organization? The outcomes of such "open houses" are hard to conceive; at the very least recruitment might be stimulated. If through reasonable expenditure of funds such quarters could be enlarged, brightened, and made visible, then it is possible that the larger portion of taxpayers who do not use the library might come to understand more quickly the professional nature of the services. No easier assault on the taxpayer's pocketbook could be visualized than such space utilization. It, in turn, seems more possible through fixed bookmobile use than in any other way.

A matter of values is being debated here. If the librarian and library board feel that library service can be called such only when offered through the medium of a suitable edifice, then the suggestions above are out of bounds. But if library service is the bringing to people everywhere the resources, materially and professionally, which are necessary for the development of a mature population in this country, then the physical confines are not nearly so important as is the provision of service which guarantees a minimum level. So far as the public is concerned, it could be presumed that they will respond in kind to a new physical set-up which offers far more potentiality for their satisfactions than the old, unsafe, and unattractive quarters familiar to them from their childhood.

It should be stressed that this proposal has little to offer communities capable of carrying the burden of renewing or rehabilitating their library plants to meet the demands of the future decades of this century. Since most of the cities in this country are small, however, with decreasing ability to provide for essential services from property taxes, the library profession must help provide some practical and achievable answers to the problems of revitalization of library building and services. As long as the objectives of service are being met—or even approached—the matter of suitable buildings is possibly of secondary importance. Staff, material resources, the desire to expand the value of the library in the community for all ages and all people—these are the essentials which can take hold and grow in a metal

HAROLD GOLDSTEIN

container as well as in a brick-and-mortar shell. If money were available for new buildings, etc., should no longer be the excuses for not improving the role of librarianship. Improvement can start *now* if the profession is interested in experimentation, leadership, and achievement.

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2. American Library Association. *Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation, with Minimum Standards*. Chicago, The Association, 1956.

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Library Trends

Forthcoming numbers are as follows:

April, 1961, *Antiquarian Books*. Editor: Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, Bibliographical Consultant, H. P. Kraus Company.

July, 1961, *Future of Library Service: Demographic Aspects and Implications*. Editor: Frank L. Schick, Assistant Director, Library Services Branch, U. S. Office of Education.

The numbers of LIBRARY TRENDS issued prior to the present one dealt successively with college and university libraries, special libraries, school libraries, public libraries, libraries of the United States government, cataloging and classification, scientific management in libraries, the availability of library research materials, personnel administration, services to readers, library associations in the United States and British Commonwealth, acquisitions, national libraries, special materials and services, conservation of library materials, state and provincial libraries in the United States and Canada, American books abroad, mechanization in libraries, manuscripts and archives, rare book libraries and collections, circulation services, research in librarianship, cooperation, legal aspects of library administration, book publishing, public relations, library administration, bibliography, adult education, newly developing countries, photoduplication, music libraries, state aid, and theological libraries.

